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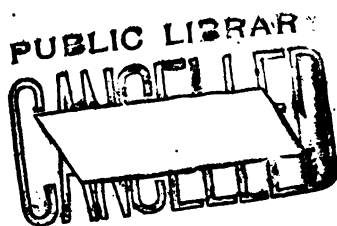
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# A LEGACY.

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VOL. I.









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A LEGACY. *Sup*

BRING THE  
LIFE AND REMAINS OF JOHN MARTIN,  
SCHOOLMASTER AND POET.

WRITTEN AND EDITED BY  
THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

*Constance M. M.*  
"Life is real, life is earnest,  
And the grave is not its goal."  
LONGFELLOW.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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## A. L E G A C Y.

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**I** HAVE received a legacy, strange  
and sad—most sad because it is a  
legacy ; because no result of it, whether  
good or ill, can affect the bequeather, no  
voice of blame or praise, respect or pity,  
reach the ear that,

“ Filled with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just.”

Nevertheless my promise shall be kept.  
Not merely because it was a promise ;  
given, almost without consideration, to  
comfort the last hours of a dying man,  
but from the conviction that many of  
the living will be the better for my  
straightforward telling of this, his simple,

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sad story—the story of a brave soul fighting with never-ended adversity ; a pure soul remaining untainted amidst a mass of such vicious corruption as can only be imagined, for it must remain untold ; a religious soul which kept its faith in God unclouded, even like the old martyrs, to the cruel end. A soul, too, which, from birth to death, was imprisoned in a diseased and feeble body, subject to all the morbid and malefic influences which such a body must necessarily exercise over the spirit, to which it is less a garment than a cernent.

The wonder is, not that the man died, but that he lived so long, and contrived to put so much into his brief twenty-nine years. The history of such a life, if read by some—shall I say many?—who, with every material for happiness—health, wealth, friends, hopes—find existence a

burden, and make it, to themselves and to others, a perpetual misery, may accomplish a little of what this humble unknown man longed to do, and died in the anguish of having been forced to leave undone. Viewed by our mortal eyes, John Martin's life was a total failure ; a waste of material which might have worked out noble ends ; a ceaseless struggle upwards to the light which never came ; a never-satisfied craving for the mere crumbs of happiness which fall from so many careless tables, but which fell far away out of his reach. There was in him power, will, perseverance ; all the elements of success, except the mere physical capacity to carry them out. Added to this, the continual overhanging shadow of death, which was to him at once a spur and a despair. Yes, humanly speaking, his life was a failure—might always have been.

But Azrael pitied such sublime dismay,  
And led him onward by another way.

I begin my task with his "legacy" before me. It consists of worn old copy-books filled with early schoolboy poems ; MSS. of later date, carefully copied out or arranged, with brief annotations in a different and feebler hand, there being, alas ! no time left for more ; two large note-books, or journals, kept faithfully to the last with a rare neatness and accuracy, and in a quaint bold handwriting. Suddenly it fails a little, there is a pause of severe illness, and then an abrupt ending with the touching words, "Patience, patience."

This is all : except the pencil sketch, an engraving of which faces this volume, the only portrait of him extant, done by a friend not long before he died.

As I sit writing, surrounded by all these mementoes of a lost—no, let us only say an



ended life, I cannot but think that if those who have gone before us “into the shadow”—or into the light—can know anything of what is happening on earth, John Martin, wherever or whatever he is—and there was about the man that strong individuality to which, living or dying, *he is* seems the only appropriate word—would be glad that I am doing what I now do, in order that he should not wholly pass away and be forgotten.

To begin his history.

First, let me relate how it came to my knowledge, and my own small part therein, with a deep regret that it was so small; that various inevitable circumstances, added to his own exceeding reticence and independence, caused me to know almost nothing of the real character of the man until he died. I only saw him once—no, twice; but that was not *him*, alas!—and his

letters to me, which I put in my usual safe and sacred receptacle for most letters, the fire, did not number half a dozen in all. Consequently he was, except in the merest external and literary sense, almost a stranger to me from first to last; a fact which, now that it has become irremediable, adds to the melancholy earnestness with which I tell my tale. Most of us try our best to do "what our hand findeth to do," but are we careful to do *all* that we might have done? Do we not sometimes live to consider, sorrowfully, whether, if we had only thought of it at the time, we might not have done just a very little more? I do.

Eight or nine years ago—I cannot recall the exact date, for it made little impression on me at the time, such requests being so common to us workers in literature—but about nine years ago, a friend and neighbour (he allows me to name him—the Rev.

Robert Linklater) asked me if I would see and give a few minutes' advice to a young man who was then staying at his house, having been nursed there through a lingering convalescence. He was a "poor fellow" from the East of London, who had risen out of the very lowest ranks, and contrived to educate himself, by hook or by crook, so as to become a teacher at one of the schools there, in which Mr. Linklater was a most devoted and faithful worker. The young man had speedily won the respect of everybody who knew him. He "wrote poetry" too (which I was rather sorry to hear), and previous to his engagement at this school had gone through great privations ; in fact, I think he had been first discovered by some charitable person in a workhouse hospital, and saved out of depths of want and misery, perhaps worse than misery, of which no record now remains.

Struggling out of this thick darkness into what light he could get, reading hungrily every book that came in his way, learning at every spare moment all he could, in the hope of ultimately qualifying himself for being a regular certificated schoolmaster—such was the picture my friend drew of his *protégé*.

“You will find him a very clever fellow, and a very good fellow too, though whether he will ever be what he means to be—a—a poet——” and his introducer smiled.

So did I, more sad than amused, though I only said, “Send the lad to me.”

And the following day he came. A mere “lad,” though he must then have been over twenty-one; but, so far as my memory serves me, he did not look above eighteen or nineteen. He was dressed “like a gentleman;” that is, the clothes he wore seemed so completely his own and so

suitable to him, that whether or not they belonged to his original rank in life, you never paused to consider. Without being handsome, or even good-looking, he had the sort of head that is called "poetical"—rather Shelleyish in character—with a youthful grace about it and an unmistakeable refinement, very attractive.

He looked ill, and told me he had been very ill, for six weeks and more, in the cottage down the road, where its bachelor master, not unused to such good deeds, I knew, had "nursed him like a brother." This, told with a shy, reticent, but evidently deep-felt gratitude, was all he said about himself and his affairs.

I rather liked the young fellow. There was something about him at once modest and independent. His manner was neither forward nor awkward, and his accent and language were good, remarkably good for

one who had sprung from the very humblest ranks of "the people," and could never have had any of those social advantages which we deem, and truly, are indispensable to the young. How he could have managed to become what he was, out of the depths of East-end poverty and squalor, misery and crime, surprised me ; but I asked no questions, and he gave me no information. Our conversation was solely upon literary and practical topics.

He had brought me a few MSS. to read, and sat by patiently while I read them.

They were poems, not certainly above the level of very youthful versifying, and I was obliged to say so. Their chief merit, and that, considering the antecedents of author, was not small, consisted in the excellent handwriting and the quite correct grammar and spelling.

Still I saw so little in them that, as far

as I could without wounding the feelings of the embryo "poet" by telling him that hundreds of lads of his age had done as well and better, I let the poetry question slip by, and merely advised him to educate himself in all possible ways, to take in instead of giving out, and to study other people's works rather than attempt any of his own, till his mind was more mature. Advice neither pleasant nor flattering, but he took it simply and gratefully, without much demonstration of any kind.

We then passed on to ordinary conversation about books, and so on. I asked him to stay to luncheon, and we sat down together, still talking,—I forget on what subjects,—but I remember noticing, with a certain surprised curiosity, how, both in conversation and in all the little civilities of the table, he was completely "the gentleman." That is, he seemed to

have the instinctive gentlemanhood—inborn and inbred—which one finds occasionally in every class, and which needs only a certain amount of social polish to develope it, as the statuary does his marble, into perfect form. Quite distinct is this from that mere outside refinement, under which, in the highest as in the lowest grade, one can easily discern that the original material is the very commonest and roughest stone.

Whatever had been the origin and upbringing of this poor waif and stray—his name, John Martin, being all I knew and all I asked concerning him—he was evidently not “common stone.”

I recall—though not without difficulty, it is so long ago—his figure as he stood leaning against the arch of the fire-place. It was full summer and the sunshine came in through the dining-room window, light-



ing up his boyish face and curly hair. As I said, I liked him. We lingered, talking on, till the very last minute, in spite of an appointment I had. I remember looking at him and wondering in my own mind whether he would ever “do anything,” or whether he was one among the hundreds and thousands who have aspirations, but no fulfilments, great aims and small results; whether, in short, this boy had in him the metal, the real metal, not the counterfeit—of which great men are made.

—A mere possibility, scarcely even a probability, which time only could decide; and meanwhile to hint at it or encourage it was useless; might do more harm than good. But education could do no harm; on the contrary, whatever the young man’s lot, must be to him a tangible benefit; so I repeated all those advices which the young so seldom take, and urged

strenuously the best of all cultivation—self-cultivation.

Also, I bade him come and see me whenever he chose, or found it possible in his busy life, and write to me from time to time, informing me of his progress. I added that if he liked to send me his poems, I would read, criticise, and return them ; but that my earnest counsel was in favour of study rather than poetry.

He smiled, not contradicting or gain-saying me in any way that I can remember. And so we parted ; in much cordiality, but with, I own, a certain doubtfulness on my part as to whether much good would come of the interview.

When weeks and months went by, and I heard no more of him, John Martin passed from my mind as one of the innumerable literary aspirants who mistake the appreciative for the creative faculty, or

who, having no persistent power of work, and ignorant that work *is* genius, think that genius will do everything, and that the wish to write implies the capacity for authorship.

To tell the honest truth, this young man had not struck me as being "a genius," nor even if he had, should I have reckoned it of much account, since genius unaccompanied by other qualities is as useless to us workers in the garden of Parnassus as, let us say, a spade without a handle. Still, putting this aside, he had interested me as that most honourable of characters—a man who tries to make himself. The struggle against hard fortune, the endeavour to rise in the world by his own unaided efforts, was evidently John Martin's strongest point, and this alone was deeply to be respected.

Whenever I chanced to meet Mr. Linklater, I never failed to inquire about

his friend ; always getting the same answer, that he was "doing well." Delicate in health, but managing always to earn his living and keep himself afloat, without sinking back into those cruel depths from which he had been rescued, or had rescued himself.

From time to time, once a year or so, I got a letter from the young man, enclosing MSS., chiefly poems, in which there was a slight advance certainly, but nothing to lift them above the level of mediocre boyish verses; nothing that at all would pass muster as "original" poetry. But his letters were rather original; brief, formal, with a straining after literary effect—a sort of dramatic "posing," both as to style and matter, which gave a slightly unfavourable impression—still they were very characteristic, with a certain force, both about the handwriting and the wording of

them, which inclined me to think that spite of his commonplace poetry there was power in the young fellow—a something which might come out one day, though probably in a totally different form from what he anticipated. So many people live half a lifetime without knowing in what their chief strength lies ; till chance discovers it, and then their own will alone can decide whether they have the sense to follow it up and work it out.

Therefore, I always answered Martin's letters and criticised his verses, generally without a day's delay ; for it was easy to trace, under the formality and self-restraint which characterised them, the restlessness of the *genus irritabile*. One is apt to be rather impatient of literary vanity—the bane of so many amateur authors, but which to all real authors seems so ridiculous and so small. The passion for

“seeing one’s self in print” appears a very foolish thing to those who are used to it ; and therein, perhaps, I misjudged and misapprehended this young man, whose literary ambition must have been the very heart of his life.

What that life was I knew nothing ; his letters were wholly impersonal ; and his friend Mr. Linklater having quitted our neighbourhood and become absorbed in work of another kind, no second-hand information ever reached me. Sometimes, for many months at a time, no news of John Martin reached me, and I forgot his very existence.

At last, chancing to meet his friend, I heard that he had quitted the horrible East-end of London for a quiet country life, having been appointed certificated schoolmaster at the village of Great Easton, near Dunmow, in Essex. This

position he had won under exceptionally creditable circumstances. It gave him a sufficient income for his needs, a house, pure air, and sufficient leisure for study. His health, still very doubtful, would at least have a better chance here than in the foul and unsanitary region where he was born and bred, and had worked in until the present time.

So we were glad and hopeful for him,—his friend and I,—feeling that he was in a certain sense “dismissed to prosperity,” at least to that limited form of it which was possible under the circumstances.

I then heard, though very vaguely, Martin’s faithful friend keeping his counsel with honourable reticence, that he was not the solitary monad I had supposed, but was surrounded—shall I say entangled?—with family ties, to which he was exceedingly faithful, but which had greatly added

to the difficulties of his life. Nevertheless, he had manfully and patiently done his duty, "through thick and thin," as people say.

Altogether, out of the still very small data I had to go upon, my estimate of John Martin and my hope for his future career was gradually rising; and when, a few months afterwards, I got one of his rare letters, with a heap of MSS., this feeling increased.

The poetry was certainly of a higher and more original kind, though still not much above mediocrity—not sufficiently striking to enable a man at once to make his mark and be sure of a hearing. At least such was my impression; but, doubting my own critical powers, I showed it to a friend, one of the most noted of critics as well as the kindest of hearts. He coincided in my judgment, considering the letter very much more striking than the



poetry. Still he gave hopes, and promise of help too, when the young "poet's" efforts should be of that kind which rendered help available or possible. All which I wrote to John Martin, who received the dictum, as was his wont, in total silence.

There had been in that letter of his, besides the formal constrainedness and the slight "writing for effect" which I have before named, but which many people are foolish enough to assume in writing to authors, unaware that the mere power of authorship involves an insight into characters which resents all pretence, and craves above all the simplicity of human nature ; there had been, I say, a sort of fierce melancholy which rather pained me. He complained bitterly of his isolation in that country spot ; no books, no newspapers, no link whatever to the busy world outside.

Also, no friends ; not a creature to whose sympathy and companionship he could turn in the intervals of teaching.

Now one always doubts a person who has "no friends." There must be something essentially morbid in the nature which, wherever its lot may be cast, cannot find some small interest in the people or things about it.

Generally speaking, it is not so much our surroundings that make us, as we who make our surroundings : gathering about us, by attraction or repulsion, a circle of interests, which constitutes our life. At least, so it often is, and always ought to be. The weak complain of circumstances ; the strong either control or endure them.

I was rather sorry for this morbid tone in Martin's letters, but set it down to ill-health, or the many other things of which—poor fellow !—he did *not* complain. And I

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promised a weekly newspaper and occasional books, especially French books, as he told me he was beginning to study the language.

Again a long pause, not broken even by an acknowledgment of what was sent, and which I continued to send, week after week, month after month, in faith, to the same address. Sometimes it occurred to me that he might have left, or would surely just have said, "Thank you."

But during a long life one gets so accustomed to do these small things straight on, without waiting or expecting any "thank you," that really I never thought much about it, or about him, except when writing the weekly superscription — "Mr. John Martin, Boys' School, Great Easton, Dunmow, Essex"—of which place I knew no more than what all the world knows of its "flitch of bacon" notoriety.

Now that I do know, now that I have seen, as my readers will presently see, into the deep heart of him who is dead, the then living passionate heart, burning with ambition, wrestling with suffering, craving for sympathy—when I think of all this—his silence, his reticence, his proud unobtrusiveness, assume a totally different aspect ; and, I own, my heart bleeds.

At last there came the first production of his which, it seemed to me, showed signs of that vague, untangible, but absolutely un-mistakeable quality which we call genius ; also of that deliberate systematic workmanship which constitutes art, and without which genius is no better than the clay without the potter, or the marble without the sculptor's hand.

This time it was not poems, but a three-act play, evidently modelled on the pattern of the old dramatists, but no mere copy ;

there was in it a calm sustained power, a smoothness and grace of language, and a well-defined purpose, totally wanting in his former efforts, which had been mostly of the blood-and-thunder, fire-and-brimstone Victoria Theatre style of writing. Some traces of this still remained ; a slight tendency to clap-trap and melodrama ; scene-painting instead of pure simple art ; but there was a visible and great improvement, so great that I felt warranted in writing back to him the honestest and heartiest praise.

Publication, at least at present, I could not advise. What publisher would print, on any terms except being paid for, an insanity which no professional author would ever dream of—or expect to sell, at any price, even half a dozen copies of “Placidio, an Original Play in Three Acts, by John Martin !” As for any other mode of publication, it might wander for years, from

magazine to magazine, without finding an editor bold enough to introduce to his readers this utterly unknown author ;—who nevertheless I had now good hope might be an author yet, if only he took his first step cautiously and wisely.

All this I wrote, recommending still delay, and suggesting that this important first step should be something “popular,” simple, and natural, which the play certainly was not. “Placidio” lies now beside me, a fair firmly written MS., just as I read it, with only the brief annotation added on the fly-leaf—“Sent for criticism, Jan. 10 ; returned, Jan. 17, 1876”—and I see no reason to alter anything I then said concerning it. But the public, often so narrow-minded or so cruelly sharp-sighted over the writings of living men, generally looks with larger and kindlier eyes on the *relicta* of the dead ; “Placidio” shall see

the light in good time, and take its chance of praise or blame.

This was January, 1876. How John Martin received the criticism, given heartily and hopefully, in total ignorance of his then condition, or of the fact that his days were shortening so fast, his Note-book will presently tell. As usual, he made no answer, and the year slipped by ; I taking care that on no account should the weekly newspaper be omitted, and waiting in good hope for the next batch of MSS. and the next news.

It came at last. One day, in September, 1876, I received in the midst of rather lengthened holiday-travelling, a letter from a stranger—(he permits me to give his name, the Rev. J. C. Blenkarne)—saying that he had become deeply interested in a young man, the schoolmaster of his parish, who was lying dangerously ill, and had mentioned me, and wished me to be

informed of his condition. Not asking help—this was no case of charity, at least not at present, unless, should he recover he might be unfit for school-work. He merely wished me to be told of his illness, as an apology for his long silence towards me.

Of course I wrote at once; the letter, having followed me about, was some days after date. On vague chance, knowing how important an element hope is in recovery from sickness, I suggested a plan for a sea-side change, as soon as the patient was able to be moved. The answer to this, also delayed, as it had followed me through several moves, gave much better news. Good Mr. Blenkarne had read my letter to John Martin, into whom the mere hope of change had seemed to put new life, or at least the desire to struggle for life a little longer. He agreed to my plans, and promised to carry them out as soon as.



the doctor allowed. He had the best and kindest of doctors, Mr. Blenkarne said, and it was easy to see, from the tone of the letters, that he had a most faithful and sympathising friend in his clergyman.

I was some five hundred miles from home, and could do no more than write encouragingly back, requesting Mr. Blenkarne to keep me informed of everything. I also wrote to Mr. Linklater, in case he might know further facts; and, aided by the friend whom I was visiting, I set on foot inquiries for the future; that in case the school at Great Easton had to be given up, John Martin might find other work of of an easier kind and in a milder climate; for his disease was of the lungs. Something of the kind was soon heard of: not, however, available for six months: which would just give time for him to get well. I considered whether or not to write to him

about it ; but decided not ; there being in most things so many a slip between the cup and the lip. But it eased my mind concerning the poor fellow. When he could work again work would be found him.

This was September. It was early in October before I heard again ; this time the news came from Mr. Linklater, then living, as he had been for some years, at St. Peter's Clergy Home, London Docks, and carrying on, in the heart of Wapping, Ratcliff Highway, and the regions round about, a work, the courageous endurance of which East-end clergymen can alone understand ; I did not till afterwards.

He told me that John Martin had reappeared in this his old neighbourhood, where he had laboured so long as a teacher in Mr. Linklater's school. Having recovered enough to leave Dunmow, he had  
- to visit a sister at Wapping on his

way to Dover. His tenacious affection for this sister, and all his "own folk," was, I afterwards discovered, one of the strongest points in his character. When he reached her, it was only to suffer a severe relapse, and he was now lying hopelessly ill, but tended kindly by both her and her husband. They were poor, but not in abject poverty, and, compared with their neighbours, were "respectable" people. If he had to die, and this seemed now inevitable, it was better, Mr. Linklater thought, that he should die among his own people. And he was well looked after in all material as well as spiritual needs by "us" at the Clergy Home. An establishment of which I knew, and still know, very little; but enough to honour sincerely the good men who there abide, and in their own way carry out a work, the perpetual toil, self-denial, and physical and moral endurance of which is something

marvellous, especially in young men and gently reared men, to whom life offers everything which is the exact opposite to life at Wapping, and who will reap no reward for all they do and all they sacrifice, except that grand one, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of all these little ones, ye did it unto *Me*."

Martin suffered greatly, his friend told me. The long-diseased body was now struggling its last; but the mind was clear, and the religious faith was strong as ever. His one distress was the thought of his unpublished MSS.; that he had to "die and make no sign," leave no record behind of what he felt was in him, and of which, had he lived long enough, he might have given proof to the world.

So I did what seemed most natural;—I wrote back at once, saying that if Mr. Linklater thought it would be any comfort

to his poor friend, he might tell him from me, that I would take charge of all his papers, and do my best with them. Also that I would come and see him, if he wished it, any day, or any where. In answer, a message came that Martin would be very glad if I would come, "if I did not mind coming to Wapping;" and a day in the following week was fixed for my visit.

Things are sometimes "borne in," upon one in a strange way. Though there had seemed no immediate hurry, and Mr. Linklater had appointed a day five days off, still somehow I could not rest. There was something so infinitely sad in the whole story. I thought of the poor fellow dying in a Wapping street, and then of the bright summer morning when he had been with me, years ago, full of daring hopes now never to be fulfilled. It was a wet, foggy, wretched day, and I was engaged at a

dinner-party at the other side of London, still I thought by an ingenious combination of railways I could manage to go there round by Wapping.

So I telegraphed to Mr. Linklater to meet me at the nearest station, and started at once.

Various hindrances—delayed trains and so on—lengthened the journey, and it was afternoon before I found myself at my destination—the bottom of a flight of mysteriously interminable stairs; which, as I suddenly recollected, had once been the celebrated Thames Tunnel. “Yes, ma’am, and it’s a heavy pull too,” said an old woman who was wearily mounting beside me, when a civil young policeman at the top offered a helping hand to us both.

Mr. Linklater not being there, I concluded my telegram had missed him, and

I had better go on to John Martin alone. Inquiring for a cab, the policeman said with some surprise, "Yes, ma'am, there is a stand somewhere, but it's about two miles off." So I named the street where I was bound to, inquired the way, and started off to walk.

I had not gone many steps before I found the policeman at my elbow.

"Beg pardon, ma'am, but I think I'd better walk with you; hereabouts they sometimes throws brick-bats at anybody as looks respectable."

So partly because it was near at hand, and so would save trouble to my kind protector (and during our brief walk and talk I found as much manly chivalry as in any "gentleman born" in that young Wapping policeman) I decided to go first to St. Peter's Clergy House—a place he knew well, and said it was "doing a power of

good in the neighbourhood." He left me at its door, turning away so quickly that I had no time to offer the eleemosynary coin, which is supposed necessary to be given to "inferiors" for the smallest civility ; by way possibly of proving to our noble selves that they are our inferiors. But whether or not, if ever by remotest chance that honest young fellow should read this book, I beg him to understand that his courtesy, though unpaid for, was most heartily appreciated.

Mr. Linklater being out, there was nothing for it but to go on my way, spite of brick-bats ; for they told me at the House that the last soup which had been got for poor John Martin he could not take ; that he had had a very bad night, and was not expected to live through the day. Clearly, I had not come too soon.

Just as I was starting, Mr. Linklater



came in, and we walked together to Cable Street.

What a walk it was ! I have been in many known haunts of misery—the Canon-gate of Edinburgh, the Cowcaddens of Glasgow, Seven Dials in London—but never did I see a region such as that we now passed through ; and as in its inner and unseen depths, it was explained to me by my friend, whose daily life was spent therein. The mere atmosphere, physically, was almost unbreathable ; morally—O God, is it a God or only a devil who has made all these creatures ? Men worse than the brutes ; women without a rag of womanhood left ; children,—ah ! that is the deepest horror of it all ! To this day I can scarcely look at my own child's sweet rosy face without thinking, in an agony of pity, of those wretched East-end children, with their old, withered, wicked expression.

So small they were too ; such stunted shrunken limbs peered from out their miserable rags, and almost every one of them was maimed, or crippled, or hopelessly diseased. Who could wonder ? since among the women—what fiends to bear the holy name of mother !—we scarcely saw one that was not “ drunk and disorderly.”

“ In this whole street,” said my friend as we walked through it, “ there is not one decent home or decent woman.”

However, we passed on unmolested ; everybody evidently knew “ the parson,” especially the children ; who followed us, staring at the basket I carried, as if they had never seen a bunch of autumn flowers or a rosy apple in all their lives.

What a place to live in !—to die in ! For Mr. Linklater said poor Martin could not live many hours. He had been

with him much of the previous day, and two days before Mr. Blenkarne, who had come up from Dunmow on purpose to see him, had administered the sacrament. I knew it was a dying man I was going to ; but in this horrible place death seemed almost better than life.

It was wonderful, Mr. Linklater told me, with what patience the poor fellow had borne his severe sufferings, and how calm he was in any pauses of ease. He had had all his MSS. placed in a chair beside his bed, had gone over them, and tried to write a letter to me (whether ever finished I know not ; I never got it) ; then he had piled all his papers in a heap and lay looking at them for hours, “ as a mother looks at a child.”

Talking thus by fragments, as we threaded our way through these dreadful streets, my friend and I came to the street

and the door. He glanced up at the first-floor windows—

“ We are too late. The blinds are down.”

Yes, we were too late. John Martin had been dead just half an hour.

A very respectable-looking young man, his brother-in-law, who met us on the stair, told us this, asking “ if the lady would walk up ; was it the lady he had been expecting to see ? ”

So I went.

A small room, with a smaller one behind ; poor but not poverty-stricken, and decently furnished. Three or four persons standing quietly about, or trying to comfort one, a young woman who sat sobbing, but also quietly, with a baby in her arms. The bed, where I naturally looked first, was empty ; but on the floor in front of the hearth, stretched upon a mattress, lay *something*.

He lay, just as he had died, having begged, they said, in his great restlessness, to be moved close to the fire, where it was "warmer." No fear of cold now, or suffering or pain. He had escaped from it all into the eternal peace of God.

Very peaceful he looked, though I should never have recognised in the worn and wasted man (he was thirty all but a month) the boy who came to see me years ago. Death makes many an ordinary face look grand, but this could never have been ordinary. Now it was beautiful. As he lay, partially dressed, the decent shirt and trowsers giving a strange mockery of life, busy life, to the straightened limbs and passive hands, whose work was for ever done—it was, in some things, the saddest sight! and yet—No.

"He was the best of brothers to me," sobbed the young woman. "In all his life

he never gave me a harsh word. And I'm glad he died here ; glad that I was able to nurse him, day and night, my own self, though my baby is but three weeks old."

A puny miserable little creature it was ; her husband, trying in his awkward way to comfort her, took it out of her arms and gave it to an old woman, its great grandmother, as I understood. Strange to think how easily both could have been spared : the feeble life just flickering out and the infant life scarcely begun ; yet they were left, and this life, in its prime of manhood, and unfulfilled promise, full of intellect and energy, courage and endurance, was taken away—vanished—gone.

Mr. Linklater said a few soothing words to the sister, put his hand tenderly on the marble forehead of the dead, took a bunch of violets out of my basket, and laid them on the breast. Then we all knelt down

where we stood, and he said a few words, very few and very simple, ending with the Lord's Prayer, which all present repeated after him. Soon afterwards, he and I went quietly away.

Through the full streets, filled with a crowd that every minute grew more riotous and more drunken (there did not seem to be one sober person in it), we passed ; to the thronged station, back into the busy, living, struggling world. It felt so strange.

My friend apologised for leaving me. "But I want to go back at once and see about the coffin. He must be put in it before night. They have but those two small rooms."

What a picture ! But the clergyman was only too familiar with it, and with far worse.

"Yes, it is very terrible," he said. "Often I find the living, eating, drinking, and sleeping in the same room, even

in the same bed, with the dead. If one could only get a mortuary in this and every parish, and compel them to use it! They will not, unless compelled."

Ay, that is it. In these dark corners of the earth, where human nature has sunk to the level—below the level—of the brute beasts, one is forced to believe that only compulsory means are of any avail. It is even a question, seeing how deeply-rooted and widely-spreading in every class is the curse of our country, drink; not, perhaps, bestial drunkenness, but the slow consuming habit of perpetual drinking, it is a question, I say, whether the next generation may not act upon the principle that the only means of stopping this, will be legal compulsion; namely, to make the sale of alcohol, in every form, subject to the same penal restrictions as the sale of poison.

"Could you not write something, do



something, for us in this terrible East-end ?” said my friend as he parted from me, and went back again into that blackness of darkness—a kind of hell upon earth, half lazar-house, half pandemonium, of which until now I had not had the least comprehension.

He was right. It is the living we have to think of, to labour for, not the dead ; God takes *them*. One can imagine a state of things in which mercy, not judgment, commanded, or permitted, the Deluge.

As the train swept on, we passed out of streets and houses into some sort of country, I knew not what, but I saw bare trees standing out sharply against a line of low lying yellow sunset, one of the sunsets which sometimes suddenly glorify the close of a wet autumn day. It seemed like a ray of hope ; not for this world, but the next one, where, God grant ! the broken thread

of many a miserable life shall be taken up again, and used by Him and for Him—in what way we know not, but He knows.

Yet hours after, and through all the blaze of light, comfort, and warmth, the eating and drinking, and gay or brilliant dinner-table chat, I saw before me continually that calm dead face ; those waxen motionless hands.

No, we do *not* understand—perhaps it is never meant we should—God’s dealings with us ; but we all know enough of how He bids us deal with one another. Even if we have done what we could, it never seems as if we had done enough. If we have not done it, God forgive us !—that is all I say.

This was on a Friday, the 13th of October. On Wednesday, the 18th, I heard from Mr. Linklater that John Martin had been buried the day before, at nine in the morning. His friend had chosen the

grave, and marked it carefully, so that at some future time a stone might be placed over the nameless mound.

“We gave him an honourable funeral” (it was a lovely sunshiny morning, as I had before noted)—“a large funeral, too. It was touching to see how deeply he was loved and lamented. Many of his old scholars were present. The body was brought into our church, and after the service I spoke to the assembled people as I thought John Martin would have liked. We then buried him in the quiet little cemetery of Plaistow, Essex.”

So ends the story of John Martin’s life, so far as I myself had to do with it, or knew of it. But the underneath facts of it, so far as they can be told, which is not half of what might be told, are infinitely more touching than anything I have here recorded, or even was aware of until he died.

On October the 23rd, not many days after the poor tired head had been laid down to sleep "under the daisies," I received from Mr. Linklater the following letter, which, after much consideration, I have decided to give literally.

"You have asked me to collect a few facts respecting John Martin.

"I find that he was born in the parish of St. George's-in-the-East on November 20th, 1847, and was baptised. That he was sent to St. Peter's School, and educated by Mr. Rowley, now the Reverend Henry Rowley, the well-known African Missionary, who managed our school at that time. That a Mr. Blunt, a friend of Mr. Rowley's, took a fancy to Martin, and procured for him a situation as office boy and messenger in the office of Mr. Ripley, indigo merchant, Mincing Lane, where he

remained five years. On the death of Mr. Ripley, he was employed by Messrs. Straik, Ripley, and Co. for one year and eight months.

“Always a delicate lad, he was now attacked by his first serious illness. He broke a blood-vessel, and being incapable of work, of course lost his situation. This calamity ushered in the dark night of his sad and suffering life.

“I am forbidden by a message from the dead to tell you of the awful depths of poverty and misery into which he now sank—a prohibition I regret, since, to me, this period of his life is the grandest. But in the abyss of darkness the spark of poetic light yet burnt in him; and his faith in the love of God was unbroken.

“I well remember, when I was nursing him at my house at Beckenham, how, one night, the dread of impending sickness

came upon him, the terrors of the future added to memories of the past, and he clung to me and cried out, as a drowning man might cry for his life, ‘Oh, save me from *that!*’ No words can describe the awfulness of that cry.

“He then told me, sobbing, and, as if the words were drops of heart’s blood, the story of his loneliness; for like a brave soul, knowing they could not support him at home, he went out to suffer apart; of famine—hunger so keen that once he told me he had picked up and ate a crust that a dog in the street had left; of misery which had caught hold of him, and dragged him to its lowest depths, to everything except crime.

“Out of this a kind friend, Commander Hastings, R.N., who was then most devotedly helping the clergy of the parish, and is now himself an ordained clergyman of

the Church of England, rescued him. How, where, and from what, I am bound not to say.

“ On his recommendation I engaged John Martin as master of St. Agatha’s Mission School, which I was then starting, and which certainly owes its present vitality and success to him, the first master we had. It is impossible to describe the influence he exercised over his pupils ; every one of them loved and respected him, as did we ourselves. During his stay at St. Agatha’s with me he qualified himself to become a certificated teacher ; attended lectures at the City of London College, and at the final examination took a first-class in English history and a first-class in English literature. He also obtained a second-class in the Archbishop of Canterbury’s examination in divinity. The amount of his reading, out of school-hours,

was immense ; and an orderly memory enabled him to make the most of all he read.

“ It was now necessary, in order that he might proceed to get his master’s certificate, that he should become assistant-master in some Government school (St. Agatha’s was not then under Government). Consequently, he sought and gained the appointment of master at St. Peter’s, the parish schools, where he served his time and won the Government certificate, with the highest honours that it was possible to gain.

“ He afterwards went as assistant-master to St. John’s School, Cubitt Town, Poplar, where he remained ten months, and was then appointed head-master of the school of Great Easton, Dunmow, Essex, where he remained two years and ten months, until his death-sickness.”



Of that death-sickness there is almost no record. It must have been endured in total solitude, broken only by the visits of his good and kind doctor, and the clergyman, Mr. Blenkarne, who wrote to me by his wish, and who, now, in answer to my request, has given me the following facts, only too few, concerning him :—

“John Martin was master of the boys’ school, Great Easton, for two years and a half before his death. What induced him to come to so quiet a place I don’t know, except that he might have more leisure to study and write. Certainly the amount of stipend could not have been the inducement.

“I was curate in charge of that parish, and learnt to respect him very highly. He was so conscientious and energetic ; gained such complete control over the boys, and at the same time won their goodwill and

love; principally, I think, through his justice and impartiality; for, though very strict, he never punished without reason, and never threatened punishment without carrying out his threat. Since his death, I have universally heard expressions of regret that he was no longer the master there; a great deal for an agricultural parish.

“It was only during quite the latter part of the time that I knew of his attempts at composition. He laboured under considerable disadvantages in being of a very undemonstrative disposition. Moreover, he had no congenial spirits whatever to associate with; and I fear, therefore, suffered at times from great depression. I could not find books enough for him to read, or rather to devour. During the last six months of his life he taught himself French well enough to read it.

“His last illness, during which I may say I only first learnt what was in him, was very distressing, as he was dying of a complication of disorders, chiefly affecting the heart and lungs. His religious faith I found to be built on a very strong foundation ; it having been at times in his early youth sorely tried.

“I scarcely ever met with a man of more uprightness and sterling honesty, combined with humility. For though he knew what his mind was capable of, he never that I saw made the least display of his knowledge. It was, I knew, a regret to him that he had published nothing ; but he was acting under what he considered the best advice in waiting until his experience had increased.

“He left Great Easton regretted by all who had any intercourse with him. Speaking for myself, I still find myself

constantly thinking of him, and of what he might have accomplished had he had the advantages which so many of us possess, undervalue, and neglect. Nay, even what he would have done, with all his disadvantages, had it pleased God to prolong his life.

“J. C. BLENKARNE.”

Read by the light of the “Note-book” which will follow, journals which reveal at last the silent heart which in life never found any expression at all, this letter is most touching. It only proves once more the sad fact that it is not the clamorous who are most deserving, and that to do even what at the time seems one’s best, is sometimes not half enough. When I think of that utterly shut-up life, starving in silence—not physical starvation, for I believe the master of Great Easton has a good

school-house to live in, and all needful comforts,—but spiritually separated by a gulf wider than that between Dives and Lazarus, from the hell upon earth out of which he had climbed, to a sort of intermediate state, whence he saw afar off the supposed paradise of his dreams—culture, refinement, art, music, literature ; above all, intellectual sympathy and companionship—when I consider all this, and how perhaps, had we known it sooner, things might have been made a little different, I too, with a sore heart, accept the eternal “too late.”

But it is not too late to do that which, after all, the man would most have desired—to put forth to the world in a readable form that which really was his truest self, and which will, at least for a short space, keep his name alive. Strange to say—and yet not uncommon—while he was struggling so hard and so vainly to be a poet, it seems

not to have struck him that his prose writing, which he never mentioned, had in it a terseness, a vigour, a power of clear thought and vigorous expression, which would soon have secured him the fame, and probably the money, which his commonplace verses could never hope for.

His note-book and incidental essays—descriptions of the life around him, and comments on the wider life of the outside world from which he was entirely secluded, are far the best exponents of John Martin. As such I shall give them, interspersed with any comments or explanations which seem necessary. And lastly, or intermediately, as seems best, I shall choose such of those poems as approach nearest to true “poetry,” or those which were the most precious to the poor heart once so full of passionate ambitions, aspirations, and regrets, but which has now for more than a

twelve-month been a mere handful of dust in Plaistow Churchyard.

No matter ; the spirit is alive somewhere, with some One ; the Holy One who made it and knew it, tried it, found it pure gold—the purer for the fierce refining fire—and took it. With the dead all is well. And this “Legacy,” while fulfilling what he desired, will make him still a help, an influence, and a blessing to the living.

The first journal is headed “Note-book of Thought, Experiences, Readings, &c.,” and dated in the first page, September 12, 1872, besides which is written, in a much maturer handwriting—“Finished, Dec. 21, 1874.” Also, doubtless, one of those pathetic annotations made by John Martin in his last few weeks or days of life. “Note.—In order to excuse any lapses, or clumsy ungrammatical expressions in this book, let me state that not one piece of

composition has been elaborated. As I wrote it first it stands in the book."

There is likewise a list of addresses, the places at which he lived during the two years—64, Wapping Wall; 11, Pearl Street, St. George's-in-the-East; 14, Church Terrace, Cubitt Town, Poplar; 56, Exmouth Street; and finally, Great Easton, Dunmow, Essex. Evidently, the young man had none of the so-called "eccentricities of genius," but a regular, accurate, and methodical mind. An extract from Emerson, one of his most favourite authors, and who seems to have exercised over him the strongest influence, begins the journal.

"There is one mind common to all individual men; every man is an inlet to the same, and all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman to the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel;



what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who has access to this universal mind, is a party to all that is and can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent.”—*Emerson's Essay, "History."*

This strikes the key-note of all that follows, and points out the intrinsic and self-sustained manliness of Martin's character; its strength and independence. There seems to have been in him less than the usual amount of "love of approbation," the curse and weakness of so many of his kind. He did a thing because it was right to be done; he thought because he had a right to think and to perpetuate his thoughts. Something of the honest self-sufficiency of Burns—"A man's a man for a' that"—seems to have kept him afloat through that sea of misery which constituted his whole life. He begins thus:—

1872. *Sept. 12, Thursday.*—(I have omitted Wednesday, on the evening of which day I idly wrote some idle remarks which, as this is a book intended for my improvement hereafter, I shall not consider useless—so insert them.)

*Sept. 11.*—How hard it is to give one's mind to serious thinking. Thoughts, like clouds, hover in our mental atmosphere, but they remain thoughts, seldom falling in the rain-drops of words to refresh and sweeten our lives. When we can find words for them—to leave the simile behind—how mean and utterly unworthy of words the thought appears. It seems to us when too late that we have parted with the treasure of our inward-self for a thing altogether of no account. A spider just pounced upon a little fly coming across the window-pane from a small cell at the top—a bloated monster—routed him out!

Almost at the same moment a large one came slowly down along a thread in another pane higher up. His road led him immediately beneath a large fly which was hanging helplessly

on a thin thread, too weak I suppose for the spider to travel by. In this difficulty—the fly suspended above his reach—what does the brigand do but try with might and main at the other threads, jumping up and down so as to shake the living supper into his maw. At last, one desperate jump, and he has the fly by the leg—then pulls him gently down, goes painfully up the precipitate path, and suddenly, with one unsteady, yet resolute rush, gets into his lair. I think of Pope's lines—

The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,  
Feels in each thread, and lives along the line.

The couplet by the way is rather the thought, from Sir John Davies.

We will not attempt to disguise our indifference to, and scorn of, our mean way of life. We never attempt to extract from seemingly worthless, monotonous days'—knowledge, power, and happiness. How unwise! By throwing our lives into perspective, as it were, we arrive in time to a perception of our own character, our own aims—what we have done—what we

have thought—what we intended to do, and eventually, knowing ourselves, we shall become wise indeed.

Few perceive this wonderful fact. The impulse once given, our mechanical life begins. We needed the robust hand of Nature to make us stand and run; henceforward we think that nothing else is behind us but that brute force, urging us along our brutal pathway. We never believe that—

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,  
Unseen both when we sleep and when we wake.

We cannot see them; that is a sufficient reason to us that they do not exist. We resolve to see nothing but the bare hard fact—poverty, pain, hardship; not the poetical, wise, spiritual meaning to be drawn from them. We make up our mind that everything around us is mean and devoid of interest. God knows, we become mean and devoid of interest also. It becomes a settled conviction, cherished darkly, nursed tearfully and bitterly, that we are not loved. Nobody gets any love or tenderness from us. We don't feel the strength of Milton; we cannot write a

great poem or do something to astonish the world; we therefore remain in ignorance, we never try to astonish ourselves. So thought not the olden bards—so thought not the olden saints. Everything around us is “fleeing to fables;” things most abject now shall be dignified and rendered great in the future of the world. Nothing is mean. Float with the tide, poet, painter, writer—float with the tide. Down the long stream of time all these so-called trivial things are floating; identify yourself with them and you shall live. Troy—what was it? Athens or Rome, Babylon or Nineveh. London and Paris and New York shall stand yet like gigantic vague shadows of the past.

Homer when he lived had no circle of admiring friends to receive his productions, for the Trojans were to them (the Greeks) as the Fenians were to us, not quite so near in point of time, but not at all mystical—quite as real and commonplace. The daily life of the Greek, peered into by the scholar after the lapse of centuries, was mean and sordid, to mean and

sordid men, as our own appears to be. I doubt whether the "Three Hundred" looked very heroic to their companions or to the Persians ; very bloodthirsty, very brave, very cruel, I suppose, when they had the chance. Dante lived among uninspired and unkind men. Milton's life was very poor and obscure after the Restoration, yet during this part of his life his greatest work was completed. What prominence he had at the middle period of his life was due almost to political causes, to his advocacy of popular measures. Had he written nothing but "Paradise Lost," and had he received no helping hand, probably he would have shared the fate of Otway and Butler. Let us look with spiritual eyes, and we shall see significancy and passionate poems in our hourly walks. Life itself is a terrible poem. More weird, more heart-breaking, more ethereal, more enchanting at times than the "Divine Comedy."

*Sept. 12.*—List of my books.

Here follows a catalogue of two pages,

including many classic works : Milton, Shakspeare, Pope, *Tatler* and *Spectator*, Hook's "Tasso," "Orlando Furioso" in Italian, Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," Wordsworth, Coleridge, Longfellow, odd volumes of Dickens and other novelists, the rest chiefly solid and school literature ; some of these are marked "To Ellen" (his sister), "To Ben" (his brother), doubtless meant to be given after his decease.

This is about the third little library I have formed. The other two, in my days of want, have gone; whither I know not. When I get about 1000 books, I shall conclude that I have a collection worthy the name of a library. I shall surround myself, if events work my way, with all the good poetry of the English language, and the good prose.

Mr. Linklater and a lady—his mother, I believe—called at twelve o'clock this day.

I have (in the Wapping school) a mischievous and altogether unmanageable fine boy, of about three years old, large-limbed, with jet black

eyes. He is my evil genius in the shape of a child. I have broken two panes of glass, while holding him to my side or giving him a tap of the cane, during the elders' reading lesson. The reason I have had him so close to the window is, that I call him thither when he has been causing a petty revolution in some distant part of my empire. He gives such a hideous cry when he is punished in the least, that it makes one for the moment think that he is really hurt. Only for the moment, however, for lo ! in the next he is at his old tricks again. This afternoon I hear a smothered laugh running along the whole line of students on my right hand. I look over to where he is sitting, having an instinctive knowledge that the occasion is to be found in him. There he sits, a ludicrous picture, yet annoying to me ; his face covered with soot ; his clean pinafore—he has one on every day—black as the tea-kettle. He has slipped his hand up the chimney, which is immediately behind him, and is now—unconscious of my noiseless approach towards him



—rubbing with great industry his dirty hands into his eyes.

Sometimes I banish him to the mountains—that is, to the stairs; sometimes I place him solitary in the midst of the great desert of flooring beyond the stairs; sometimes I stand him on a form. From the stairs he will make sly raids on any other rebels, not quite so daring, who may be close at hand, but will fly panic-stricken if I creep slowly as if with the intention of coming upon him without his perceiving me. If I come, cane in hand, openly towards him, he will take it coolly, and will not go to his place of exile till I drive him thither. From the desert he will glide into the yard and turn on the water. From the form he will very soon descend if my eyes are not turned in his direction. He is the child of a lighterman who was drowned a few months ago in the Thames.

This will be a capital plan for improving my composition—to note down things which are around me, in unpremeditated language. I have long known and felt that I must bestir

myself, but I must put those thoughts and feelings into 'practice now. Hard and stern has my struggle been, but I have not entered the real battle of life yet—that still lies before me, vague and huge; but I know not what results will follow the fight. I have placed before my mental vision high performances of the Intellect, to which I hope in time to aspire. To assert my independence as a Man—one of God's creatures—not as a mere fellow and inter-loper, whose blood

Has flowed through scoundrels ever since the flood.

On me devolves no light task. I have no friends who know my real wants. In the whole world I cannot count more than two who would be ready to lend me a helping hand if I were starving to-morrow. Under my smooth exterior Enceladus burns—must burn—with passionate thoughts, with wearying plans for greatness never perhaps to be realised; with visions of green fields and happy days and friends of the soul—things which I have never had. So courage and decision! I have advanced won-

derfully. It surely is no hard thing for me still to advance. But life is gone while we are planning what to do and what to be. If I could learn that sublime philosophy—that is, if I could throw forth into the actions of life the thoughts of compensation which my inner mind knows to be true, I should no longer be discontented. I am not discontented now, for I am happy in a second-hand way; but one cannot help yearning to commune with the good and high-souled and beautiful, whom we cannot ever meet, simply because we have not a golden bridge to walk upon. I shall, if the whim seizes me, enlarge upon the wonderful subject of compensation, as it presents itself to me in my narrow sphere of life, at some future period.

*Sept. 13, 1.30 P.M.*—Very dull weather. Mary\* returned my book of poems, and I returned her “Lights through a Lattice.” Just now a fellow—a great rogue—paralysed on one side and called “Slogger,” rushed along the

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\* I have no clue whatever to this “Mary.”

wall with a tremendous long pole in his hand, his face inflamed with frenzied anger. Following him the usual rabble who delight in a "scrimmage;" some fellows have been tormenting him—cowardly lubbers—who know his infirmity and therefore take a malicious delight in teasing him. Windows are thrown open, heads peep forth from the most unlikely places; people stop each other and ask, "What's the matter?" and for a moment one would think that some murderer had broken loose, instead of an ignorant, over-grown lad, whose anger will cool as suddenly as it arose, and whose clumsy strength is unavailing against a man's weakness. I look out too, but hearing a rough old man over the way call to his son, who is looking on, "Don't stand looking at that fool," I close the window and retire.

The half-past one bell has gone, so I must get ready for two o'clock.

5.30 P.M.—This locality—so uninteresting and vulgar to me at times—would, I doubt not, furnish endless thoughts and instruction to a

stranger with keen perceptions of what is really significant of good in human nature, and what is vile. These streets swarm with the ignorant, the vicious, the poor, the starving, the unwashed (as a matter of consequence). It is a subject of much wonderment to me at times as to where all the children especially come from. Little girls, staggering under the weight of dirty babies, and dragging in their train very often two or three brothers and sisters, little larger than babes; boys of every degree of age from six to fourteen having the entire run of the streets, whooping and singing like ferocious Indians bent on scalping and plunder—some minding babies, some playing at marbles in groups of five or six, one or two in each group being generally friends of the rival players, and who watch with great animation the progress of the game. Why do I speak of marble-playing only? The games are numberless, though not so numerous as of old, owing, I suppose, to the crossness of people who object in these material days to having their windows broken, and

also to the persistent opposition of the "Bobby," as the boys affectionately call the policeman.

One game I notice with a feeling of regret has almost become obsolete; the shoe-destroying one of "Hopscotch;" I have not seen it played for years. It is with children's games as with the fashions and enjoyments of grown-up people, they are forgotten and buried in the confusion and tussle of years, till some one revives them again and calls them new. I said these streets swarm with people. Humanity is almost at a discount here. One comes to think with less respect of the immortality enshrined in God's creatures, where they—these creatures—are surrendered apparently to the dominion of Evil. Men and women living here forget their origin. Like the eagle who passed his early days among geese and lived as they—finding when too late that his proper element was the inspiriting air—these poor things, seeing nothing but sensuality and gloom on every hand, have no consciousness of their proper destiny, have no idea of the beautiful estate to which every offspring of God

is born. Heavens! how happy might we yet be if the morn of truth and spirituality would once and for ever banish the overpowering Night of dust and despair! If the consciousness of whence we come, whither we are tending, what we can really do, what stores of gold-despising joy await us in our better choice, were to be aroused in our vague and trembling souls by the voice of no earthly prophet. Now we dare not call ourselves men or women, now we are content to surrender man's privileges, man's intellectual pleasures, man's love of Nature, man's love of God—for the lowest delights of unthinking beasts. There is no sympathy, for there is no communion of hearts and souls. We walk through the streets, and meet with no friends to our spirit. Nay, if our spirit at all overflows the body, *that* gets no kindness, no hand-shaking. All is aversion and distrust.

Most of the houses are dilapidated and unfit for human habitation. The stairs are generally very rickety, and if you attempt to ascend to the garrets, you are wrapped all the way up in

Cimmerian gloom, and may think yourself lucky if you escape knocking your head against ugly projections which these staircases very often have; for many of the houses were built a long time ago for people in a higher state of life—merchants, captains, and others—who, before the docks were made, lived in this quarter of London, almost exclusively. Many families live in one house. I do not know, from my own experience, that sixty or seventy people can manage to exist in four or five rooms, as I read that they can and do in the newspaper the other day. But I know that too many drag out an existence, huddled together indiscriminately, regardless of disease, age, or sex.

*Sept. 14.*—Take the house, No. 29, nearly opposite ours. No exceptional case at all. It is in a very broken state. There are eight rooms, so called, some of them being scarcely larger than closets. Seven of these are occupied by thirty people now at the present time. From a calculation I have made I find that a few months ago thirty-five people resided in.



these rooms. To my thinking, far too many, but in the opinion of the people themselves no wonderful or amazing thing at all. Observe that these seven rooms for thirty-five people are for kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, washing-rooms, parlours, libraries, &c. No. 29 is a favourable case, for two of the families had two rooms each out of the seven. An average dwelling home for the poor of seven rooms about here would contain forty very often, fifty sometimes. I reckon garrets as well.

At church last night (Friday) Mr. Linklater, who is staying at St. Peter's this week, preached.

*Sept.* 13.—A letter from Ben, in which he says that when he comes up he will have a "grand characteristic dance." Alluding to Bruin-like shuffles with which we used to beguile a few minutes sometimes when I was in a mood for the ridiculous.

I have been reading this week Hawthorne's "American Note-Book," and it suggested to me the idea of keeping a note-book myself, for, as I have said, and firmly believe, nothing is trivial

and commonplace. Everything has an interest if we will but strive to educate ourselves to perceive with Wisdom's eye. It is only when we are on the spot that we think the particular neighbourhood or place dull; when we are far away it assumes in our imagination a romantic and beautiful aspect. The best creations of the novelists are, in reality, not creations; they were, and are, living, breathing men and women, transferred from actual life into immortal pages, made immortal only by their repeating everyday speech and manners, because people recognised the fidelity to Nature displayed by the novelist in his novels, together with the tinge of genius which no amount of fidelity could compensate for, thrown into every character. I have conversed with people whose peculiar natures and curious attributes a writer of genuine fiction would have been delighted to know. I often see Mrs. Nickleby, minus a little of the gentility. Mrs. Gamp is no stranger to me. Gil Blas, in his early days, one may continually see. Cunning, humorous rogues like Sancho

Panza, we should not have far to march for. The other day Micawber came to me, a little more disreputable perhaps than the original one, and telling me he had a plan to put into execution the next day by which he could and would, without the faintest shadow of doubt, reap "golden advantages," borrowed sixpence to be repaid punctually the next day. I haven't seen him since; I don't expect to see him, yet I know that the man, had he the means, would pay me with alacrity, but I suppose he has sought ere this the shelter of Charity's Prison, as I call it.

Hawthorne is, in my opinion, the second in point of originality and wonderful power of any writer America has yet produced; the first place I reserve for Emerson. He is certainly the first novelist. His "Scarlet Letter" and his "Transformation" are, according to the unanimous opinions of all judges, simply unsurpassed. I have not read them, but judge myself of his genius by the beautiful story of the "Seven Gables;" "Our Old Home," full of tender

loveliness, and his graceful Note-Book. His last work, "Septimus, a Romance of Immortality," unfinished, has received the highest commendation. Hawthorne lived in a dream world. He was fond of the quaint, the old, the spiritual, the mysterious. The noisy, commerce-loving, material people of the Republic disgusted him. Yet he loved his native land ardently. His Note-Book is full of queer thoughts which he gave words to just as the whim seized him. Sketches of the farmers, doctors, lawyers, and other folk he met in his rambles, afterwards, I suppose, to be worked up into his tales. I will put down a few thoughts and suggestions of tales afterwards to be written, or rather which, I daresay, he intended to write.

Here follow a number of extracts from Hawthorne's Note-Book, ending thus:

I find that Hawthorne was on intimate terms with Emerson about 1841; but cannot see any reference made to Emerson in a familiar way after 1843. Hawthorne died 1864.

Note-book continued :

If we could live with whom we loved instead of being denizens of the same home and the same street with those who cause us endless annoyance and pain, how happy might we in this particular be! One gets horribly tired of dragging out an unloved and unlovely life. "O for a lodge in some vast wilderness!" where the miseries of life can never come. I may seem to rhapsodise; but I am in too stern a mood to do that. My complaints are real, palpable, and I would to heaven they could be dispensed with, and things take a turn. But unrelenting Fate will only change this, perhaps, for a worse state of being.

1.30.—I think I will go to the College for an hour or two.

This was the City of London College, where he was studying hard. The ills he referred to—of a domestic kind—were only too real and bitter; but upon them as upon many

other things, his biographer is bound to be—as he lived and died—altogether silent.

8 P.M.—We must bear the ills of life with as good temper, I suppose, as we bear the pleasures. It may calm our hearts to know that all cares are fleeting as all joys are, down the silent stream of Time to Eternity's oblivion—Eternity's oblivion of all earthly delights as of all earthly woes, I mean. The lesson is hard to take to our hearts—cold and very dreary, that of our incapacity to choose our own habitations, our own friends, our own way of life: the stern fact that here in one particular spot, gloomy, desolate, and deathly—our lives, long or short, must be passed. In our sky where can we discern the sun? in our desert waste of life where is the fountain? Yet, if we keep brave hearts, steadfast purposes, and bear all, undoubtedly we shall pluck from each monster looking Evil its invariably hidden Virtue.

I saw nothing of consequence in the papers this afternoon beyond the fact, which has been

robbed of consequence in that it has been from the first an understood thing, that England will have to pay three or four millions to America as extenuation money for the escape of the *Alabama*. There was a feeling of undisguised affection for the South entertained by the aristocratic and genteel party in the country from 1861 to 1864, turning to contempt in '65, when the Union was re-established; that feeling had a great deal to do with the *Alabama* existence. Now we have to pay for that weak and, in my opinion, from 1861 till this moment, wicked sympathy. The Americans have been too 'cute, however; they have shown no sentiment of honour in the affair, and have gained the dollars only; they do not withdraw from the arbitration with clean hands, but the ring of gold has a music for them far sweeter than the "music of the spheres," or the music, silent but expressible, of fraternal friendship and love.

The tram-cars have within the last week been running busily along the Commercial Road (for the first time) and are crowded. There is a blind

man who wanders regularly every day through the streets adjacent, and along the "Wall." Concerning the origin of his blindness, the following story—whether true or false I know not—has been told me. Twenty or thirty years ago he was a ruffianly, disreputable coal-whipper, whom no one dared affront or withstand; he was the terror of the neighbourhood. Every hour he was cursing his eyes in a shocking manner until it seemed God's unfailing judgment came upon him; his vision fled for life. Now he wanders about, stick in hand, no one accompanies him, and I never see him begging; but I suppose he has a circle of pitying patrons, else he would not travel about so incessantly. I am told he goes to the Roman Catholic chapel regularly every Sunday without being guided, threading his way by himself. Sometimes I see the children take him by the hand, and pilot him clear of carts and other dangers, but I have never seen him guided ostensibly by anyone. I wonder what his reflections are! I hope he is a better man, and has learnt to be wiser than he



was of old. What must his thoughts be, devoid of that natural gift which we are accustomed to think so little of, but which in reality is the best earthly treasure we have. God knows! The state of the blind must be a very mournful one; very cheerless indeed, if they have not friends and lovers who can be in their love and sympathy eyes and hands and feet to them. A blind man is at everyone's mercy, and in these pushing days that mercy is very often withheld. Then no books, no sight of green leaves, and pleasant faces, and stars and clear skies; all a vague, horrible blank. We think with pitiful tenderness of Milton's blindness, whose mind was stored with knowledge and wisdom, whose mind was to him an eye of inexhaustible light. But when the outward eyes are extinguished, and the inward one gives no radiance, has never been lit, how much more wondering pity should be exhibited, how much more should helpful love be bestowed!

I notice that on Saturdays the children living around seem to revel in dirt. On other days

they are constrained, coming to school, to keep up appearances, but on the grand vacation day they have unrestrained liberty to abstain from soap and water ; that liberty they fully exercise—little pigs ! I see them slink past me, eyes averted, faces smothered in sooty dirt, yet with a grin on their features when they know they are recognised, half of shame, half of enjoyment. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, or, as some one has varied it, the shorn lamb to the wind ; and I think children have it made up to them for all the hardships which they—I speak of the children around me—undergo. They never seem to be unhappy, yet they often come to school without their meals. They are never sad, yet life is terrible enough to them. It is no sentimental sadness I speak of—underneath this “lower deep” scarcely a “lower deep opens”—sober, practical truth, only three—the work-house—the prison—the grave. Now who would believe that in my unromantic way of life, in my dirty, mean surroundings, I could yet find materials to fill twenty pages ? I started with a

theory, not of my own—the truth of which I was firmly persuaded of—and lo ! my dearth of thought, of words has noted down things which had engaged only my casual notice, never my serious thought. And as I proceed, subjects I doubt not will crowd upon me, if I can find fitting words to clothe them in. I have passed at this moment from sadness and peevishness to cheerfulness and calmness, and I attribute the change not to the blood, nor to my food, nor to my quietude, but to the Almighty disposer of Events, who is present though we perceive Him not. Everything He deigns to look upon, to bless, becomes sanctified as with cloven tongues of fire, though before never so unhallowed, never so abject. In the hour when He opens our secret door and enters, we are ready to say, with holy George Herbert—

Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,  
Makes that and the action fine.

He must be with us else we are nothing. Creatures of His, He can unmake us. Guided by Him we shall ascend to the society of cherubim

and seraphim. O may He make our hearts holy ! O may He instil into us high and heaven-scaling endeavours ! may He make our hearts special Sinais, centres of God-like words and thoughts, holy and true !

*Sept. 15.*—Continuing my previous remarks, I would note a fact which suggests to me the cause of a great deal of the unhappiness of the people around, that cause itself being the effect of other causes, viz., the absence of home-life ; the children are always in the street ; the women gossiping at street doors ; the girls, when not at work, pleasuring—concerts, music-halls, theatres, walks, and the like ; the men, when not at work, in the tap-room, or standing in their shirt-sleeves at the corners of alleys and streets. The warm, cheerful fire at home ; the clean faces of the innocent children reflecting the light ; the animated conversation ; the reading of books ; sources of calm, wholesome enjoyment, restricted to no class of human beings, but within the reach of all classes, are simply unknown. Of course, I know

they are not educated up to these things, these methods of homely pleasure, but I contend that it is no extraordinary thing to think that they might be, to hope that they shortly will. Who can doubt that good books and habits of reflection would very speedily put the so-called hard-working, drudging, mean man into—one may write without much exaggeration—a new world?

The women are mostly very slatternly, grossly ignorant, and very often disgusting in their appearance and manner. Their features robbed of all beauty, of all tenderness, of all humanity, by the spirit of evil residing within them, and by the evil spirits which they can procure in unlimited quantities at the “Red Bull” or the “Blue Lion,” for they are seldom limited in their pockets when the drinking fit is upon them. They haven’t the slightest idea that Tom and Jack’s sobriety and consequent happiness would be increased by cleanliness and order at home. So they surround themselves with as much dirt and disorder as they uncom-

fortably can. The meals are served up at all times even when they have the food at hand. They will not wait for one fixed time if it in the least interferes with their supposed comfort, but if Dick comes in at twelve, and Bill at a quarter past, most likely two meals will be hurriedly got ready, thus involving extra expense. Things are cooked in a hugger-mugger way too, so as to throw all the goodness and nutriment of the particular edible away. The washing is done at the most impossible times, the husband very often waiting on Sunday morning for his shirt to be dried by the fire. If they clean a room, in which eight or nine people reside, once a week, they think they have done their duty in the matter of house-cleaning. Sometimes it will get cleaned in the middle of the week ; but if so it is most likely that one of the children "wipes it out," as they phrase it. Tea is procured by the quarter of an ounce when they could comfortably buy half a pound, inasmuch as when they send the beer-can, it is very seldom for half a pint, generally a quart. In like

manner nearly all their commodities are bought in dribbling quantities, ruinous in the end to themselves.

The habit of hard drinking is the perceptible key to all their poverty and misery. The wages of an average working-man are seldom less than a pound a week ; their children go out to work at ten years of age very often, and cost their parents before that age scarcely anything for schooling and clothes, items which make a difference in a genteel man's expenditure. They do not pay much rent, for, as I have said before, one small room generally suffices. The wife not seldom does a little charring, or takes in a little needlework. They have no taxes, no calls other than their own upon them ; live, to all outward view, very poorly, and yet the wages, mark you, are often thirty shillings a week. They cannot afford clothes for themselves ; cannot see the country ; cannot live for a single day if the husband is out of work for perhaps the first time for ten or twelve years, without hinting at the workhouse. How is this ? The explanation

is very simple; they drink their earnings entirely away.

*Sept. 16.*—A fine autumnal day. I have been busy writing (of which more anon, if I carry out a certain idea), and then I've been getting the children's marks down for the excursion, which is to Richmond, on Thursday next. Then I've been clearing my table and desk of a litter of papers. Must plead guilty, too, to reading "Mrs. Halliburton's Troubles," by Mrs. Henry Wood—a very satisfactory novel. I like to roam in a dream-world now and then; it stimulates me to real endeavours after excellence in the path I wish to tread.

A Dutch girl committed suicide last week in the Scheldt. The reason assigned by her for her premeditated crime was that her mother found fault with her because she—the girl—wore out her boots too quickly!

The moon now (just 9 P.M.) looks extremely beautiful. Light fleecy clouds across the green sky. Everything a hundred feet above the earth mysteriously, enchantingly solemn. All seems



to speak to one's spirit, apprising us of a holier and happier state. Nothing in the moonlight looks mean—Reason gilds all, makes all lovely. I take the sun as a type or symbol of love, the moon as one of reason. The sun is the heart of the world; the moon is the mind of the world. If we pursue the analogy we shall see that it has a deep foundation. From the heart issue streams of blood to nourish the body; from the sun streams of light to nourish and create all organic life. The sun turns all to gold—so does love; the sun is warm—as love.

Reason is the reflection of love. The moon's light is reflected from the sun. He who loves most will know most. Love makes us wise. The rays of the moon are cold, giving light but no warmth—so do the rays of reason. Reason looks out of Egyptian darkness, and has its vision dimmed every morning by clouds, just as the moon's light is dimmed at times; but Love looks out of the clear heavens ever bright, ever vivifying. Yet reason, though its light is not so dazzling, beholds more, as we can discern things

by the light of the moon without making our eyes ache. Love dispenses with time and space—the sun's rays travel millions of miles. Reason arrives at its object soberly; the moon is not so very far from the earth. I should like to trace the analogy another time; it seems to me to be very startling.

I hear them yawning upstairs, so shall finish for to-night.

*Sept. 17. 5.30 P.M.*—I feel weary with the children's noise, and the incessant trouble to keep them quietly to their lessons. It is one of the most perplexing occupations in existence—that of a schoolmaster. It needs a person possessed of a philosophical, stoical, Christian, humane, just, wide-awake, self-possessed, iron temperament, to go through with the duties in a proper manner.

*Sept. 18.*—I am not in a writing mood these last two days, owing to the bother about the excursion, to which I look forward with as much eagerness as the children. It is a great treat indeed to the poor little beggars; they see

nothing from one year to another besides brick walls, cheerless homes, and dirty faces. A long, long day on the grass under the trees or on the river is little short of a heavenly day to them.

In the dearth of thought to-day I idly gaze upon the open page of Shakspeare—the immortal, the many-sided, the beautiful—and I note down some of his wise lessons in few words.

*Sept. 19.*—Children's excursion to Richmond. Owing to the shallowness of the river, we had to feel our way up with poles, when near Richmond. All passed off well.

*Sept. 20.*—Utterly worn out to-day. A heavy weight at my chest, and a cold. The morn and eve of yesterday were very cold.

*Sept. 21.*—Very unwell.

I have been reading this week five plays of Massinger, who ranks next to Shakspeare, in the opinion of competent judges, as a tragic writer.

“A New Way to Pay Old Debts.” Comedy.

“The Fatal Dowry.” Tragedy.

"The Emperor of the East." Play.

"A Very Woman." Play.

"The Bashful Lover." Trago-comedy.

A few weeks ago I read four other plays of his.

While at dinner to-day a black cat walked leisurely in, without any bashfulness (whence I know not), and, after eating a mouthful or two of food, and swearing amicably at our rather astonished cat, vanished. They say that to have a black cat walking suddenly into one's place is a sign of luck. Very good.

*Sept. 28.*—These last two or three days we have been engaged in the wretched moving business, and to-day we have removed the last.

I have a hundred things to commit to paper, but cannot bring my mind to composition, in the uncertainty of my affairs.

The inward spiritual man—if things went right—should mould and shape to itself all outward circumstances. We should feel that nothing short of death ought to give us lasting discomfort ; then only, if we have not done what we should do.

There should be a remedy lying within our own selves for every evil which afflicts us. If we are poor, let us try to make our understandings and our souls rich. If our surroundings are mean, let not our lives be mean also. If our body is sick, let us strive to keep mentally healthful. There is no doubt that we make our good and evil, that the separate roots of all events are in ourselves.

Man is his own star.

Our "good and ill," as the fine dramatist said, are angels springing from our own acts. Let us be wise and watch ourselves. As soon as we make all streams of light that issue from us pure and clean, all things illuminated by them shall appear, maybe, pure also.

There is another blind man, whom I often notice, who, led by a little boy or girl, paces up and down the Commercial Road, and sometimes penetrates into the Whitechapel Road. He is much older than the blind man mentioned before—in fact, he is about seventy-three or

seventy-four, and is a very odd little man. His business—made a cloke to cover his begging—is selling matches, and I can hear his melancholy cry a long way off. He has a long oilskin coat, which reaches down to his heels, and protects him from the rain, and he has also a white hat on his head. Although I cannot conceive a more miserable life, for he is very old, feeble, and the nights are getting cold, I believe he manages to drag out a not altogether comfortless existence; he is known, and I suppose makes a little money. He misses his little guide sometimes, and then he will candidly, half crying, tell the people that he pays him or her sixpence a week, and that he or she ought to know better.

*Sunday.*—Walk with Mr. Linklater.

*Sept. 29.*—To-day is St. Michael's as well as All Angels' particular festival day, and I am led to insert this well-known fact by the reflections which I was led into yesterday. The evil we do in early childhood grows into our good angel; the evil we do afterwards into our destroyer.

Man is his own star, and the soul that can  
Render an honest and a perfect man,  
Commands all light, all influence, all fate;  
Nothing to him falls early, or too late.  
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,  
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

These lines from the epilogue to the “Honest Man’s Fortune,” of Beaumont and Fletcher, appear to me to contain the sterling good, free from dross, of real wisdom. No words can add to their force.

*Sept.* 30.—In our new—not at all in appearance—schoolroom, which has several advantages to be referred to presently.

1. More light.
2. No noise of carts, &c.
3. A large yard.
4. No heavy shutters.
5. More, and better, cupboards.

It also has, *per contra*—

1. The rain comes through.
2. A horrid gang of children, who annoy me most abominably. The young demons—boys and girls—regularly besieged us to-day. They

shouted out uncomplimentary allusions to me through the keyholes, and tried to clamber over the window into the room. I suppose in a little time all will subside ; but to me, with fifty-three or fifty-four of both sexes and all ages, from one to thirteen, the extra confusion and trouble they caused was extremely annoying. The neighbourhood is very barbarous, and the children hereabouts devoid of the faintest pretensions to manners.

*Sept. 30.*—Michaelmas Term at the City of London College commenced. Expenses, 11*s.* The place crowded ; activity at its height.

*Oct. 1 and 2.*—Have had a little more freedom from barbarians to-day and yesterday. Once get into children's hearts, be they never so rough themselves in their speech and manner, you may work your will with them. One undaunted fellow, about thirteen, with two black eyes, was about to fire at me with a popgun, but my hand elevated in the air, and a calm smile, made him desist. Later on, after he had been spitting in through the window, I inquired



with great solicitude the cause of his eyes being so dreadfully bruised. He told me, and since I haven't been troubled with him. He may turn up again, but eventually I shall have him as an ally.

A little girl of about four years of age ; it would be impossible to convey in words an adequate idea of the debased, low, cunning beaming from her eyes. The little sinful soul overflowing the countenance ; by-and-by to petrify it into something, far—very far—from the “human face divine.” She greeted my arrival in familiar words, calling me contemptuously “Jemmy.” Afterwards she entered the schoolroom, and behaved very well. Last night, whilst passing through King Street, she seized hold of my hands in a demonstrative manner, and when I gently shook her off, clung to my coat-tails. We are fast getting friends. To-day—Wednesday—she has been minding a baby of about a year old.

*Oct. 9.*—Almost every moment of my time since last Wednesday has been occupied, and

that fully, by various things, throwing all attempts at composition into the background. I will just place down the events of the week.

*Thursday.*—Letter to Rev. A. Wilson, Westminster, respecting advertised Exhibition of £30 per annum. Gave my address at City of London College.

*Friday.*—To Beckenham and back.

*Saturday.*—To Chelsea. Interview with Canon Cromwell respecting Certificates, &c. Reply from Rev. A. Wilson.

*Sunday.*—Reading. Find lowest common multiple.

Here follows an elaborate sum, worked out to its result. Apparently the application concerning the Exhibition failed, but, as is his habit, Martin never complains—merely sinks into silence.

*Oct. 11.*—I am in no mood to write. Into what dreary paths of life my circumstances will soon lead me I know not. Sorrow and care spring out upon my way, at the most impossible

times and places. To come upon this earth, and find every square foot of land mapped out and occupied, is the lot of many. All they can hope to do, at the best, is to live from hand to mouth like birds, happy if, when the morning comes, they can make sure of the day's food and shelter. What blasts from the "hot forge of hell" wither and scorch their hearts up, they themselves alone can tell. What doubts of the supreme goodness of the Eternal creep into their minds, no outsiders know of. It is not the sojourn for a few years among the poor and the unlovely, not the prospect of whole days of penury and sickness, not even those hopes deferred which make the heart sick, that make them sorrowful and stern: no, but the past and future contracting into so small an area, that the sky is shut out, that the soul has no breathing room. The "greetings where no kindness is;" the "dreary intercourse of daily life;" the eating of bread begrudged, the finger of scorn and contempt, the bare rags, the loathsome companions, the keen wind, the unrecognising

eyes of former friends—deeper still, starvation, sickness, and a miserable death—these are the mocking, grinning fiends of human life. Ah! from these depths if ever we escape, we should bring up the secret of true wisdom.

I think that these depths contain rare treasures for the great soul. We who shrink from every adverse wind; we who are not happy when without fine clothes and dainty food; have no conception of the extreme beauties of these seemingly stern ways of life, for beautiful and man-like spirits. It is very touching though to think of these hardships, because they appear so fixed and stubborn. Every minute is an eternity to us. A morning is a drop of time, and mirrors the Universe and Eternity. Harsh these facts are, and we never think it possible they will have their end. Our reason tells us that they will not long exist, but Death, looming so close to every man, forbids us to view their end.

Hence the gifted and the noble have experienced acute and awful anguish for which a lifetime cannot compensate, be it never so full

of an aftergrowth of joy. Charles Dickens, after thirty years have elapsed, speaks with bitterness of the sufferings of early manhood. Because the spirit suffers a whole lifetime of torment, it projects these dreary days far, far into the future, so that they make sombre and worthless our good when it comes.

*Oct. 12.*—Interview with Rev. Mr. W., Vicar of Tottenham, at Tottenham.

*Oct. 13.*—It does us good to hear the kind word, and know that the kind heart exists for us. To bear our weight of secret sorrow and care, eating our very heart away, is our lot for years. The sympathising word and the heart-look has only to come, and the barriers are thrown down, swept away, leaving us like little babes. I think that there is not enough sentiment in life. We look at things in too practical a manner. Nothing seems of any weight with us, save its relation to, or affecting, our good and evil outward circumstances. We never see the man who can draw out of us the recognition of our common origin, interests, and destiny. The soul

of the man we talk to seems as remote as the last stars visible to astronomers. We talk of our common origin, but we seldom feel the truth of it: we never compare notes, as regards the position of our spirits, the 'depth of our nature, the good towards which we hope to tend. So that each man carries in his heart a human secret, which he longs to impart to another, but it is never imparted. It swells and grows into a stream, which floods the world with the liquid, cool, pure, vivifying, of genius. Too often it escapes by minor channels, and is lost in the mud, or dries up, and dries up the soul and all good with it.

*Oct. 19.*—Black misfortune, which threatened to overwhelm me a few days since, has for a time passed away, whether to make room for something worse I know not. One cannot help looking at the darkest side, for the common experience of what we have passed through forbids us to entertain very pleasant expectations of our future. God we know is above, and in our moments of faith we are lifted up to Him;

we acknowledge His goodness, and His never-failing stores of comfort, poured alike on the evil and the good. But the moment of faith passes away, and our hours, ah! days of despondency, set in. We look skyward alone with our eyes, we gaze drearily into the coming days; we have nothing to look back upon with pleasure in the days that are gone, and our hearts break. Ah! we are sometimes depressed with the idea that we are cowards, that we have only to be brave and persevere, in order to be happy; but the heart knoweth its own bitterness.

I am getting on much better with the young barbarians, though occasionally I have a little bother with them. They, in fact all children, are very quick in noting any salient points in your physical appearance, and take their choice of nicknames accordingly. The best way is to take little or no notice of them, or smile good-humouredly; the zest for calling after you then, I find, rapidly decreases, and in time disappears.

*Oct. 20.*—What is this wonderful power called genius? Is it direct inspiration, whisperings

from the unseen world around us, echoes from those higher voices which fill Nature with harmony and joy? Or is it merely talent lifted into a higher atmosphere, faculties well developed, resources once latent brought to light, progression from the brutal and demoralising into things beautiful and good—that is to say, does genius appear in only a few, formed in them against their will and to their surprise; or does it lurk in every human heart, conferred by God as part of our very nature, and yet is it hidden from our superficial gaze?

The daily glance we give at the things around us, shows us one dead-level of intense materialism. Trade and commerce write, or rather brand, their names upon everything we see. Excepting the lofty-minded and the good—alas! too few—who manage to throw their incense of spirituality from flower-like hearts in almost every region, the Trade fiend has seized all and claims all. We trade to distant parts not for the furtherance of science or religion, as fellowship with men, but for the paltry purpose



of adding to our luxuries, and gratifying our palates. When we have gained all the money, or placed ourselves in the best commercial way, then religion and science may creep in, anyhow—it matters not to us. To a fellow who may have scraped together a few thousands, and who is anxious to have a good site for his warehouse, we will sell any place of sanctity, so that it may be pulled to pieces by him; or sacrifice any breathing place which the toiling myriads require after their task is over. By-and-by London itself will be abolished; so many railways meet in London, and converge from it, that we shall have only one grand network of rails, and no metropolis at all in years to come.

We are earthy in our enjoyments and pastimes. Our drama is merely another word for representations of violent and improbable phases of life; if at all true, not at all likely to improve the understanding or affect the heart. The grand masters of the dramatic art are forgotten; we have no pride in them, and we understand them not. Their plays, affording

wonderful scenes of pathos, of terror, of grandeur, are never acted, because the audience have no ears for noble sentiments and good music, only eyes for trapdoors and thrilling situations.

*Oct. 23.*—What a whimsical notion is that of Rabelais, found too in the writings of men before and after him, about a frozen land, in which, when the air was heated, might be heard music, oaths, sailors' cries, and various other sounds, long frozen and at last dissolved by warmth, as rain falls when the air is heated after a state of cold. Truth too, very often, is frozen in our minds, and needs the love and warmth of the heart, before it will present itself to us in a shape we cannot overlook or mistake.

*Oct. 25.*—Thanks for the beautiful friends that God sends us in our hour of need. God, who knows the extremes to which necessity and despair lead us, and the little strength we have of ourselves to enable us to live on. Not only living, breathing, bodily friends, who by their precepts and examples lead us up to true wisdom; but the panting, yearning souls of men,

dead, or far away, pressed in between the leaves of books, as flowers are pressed in, exhaling a delicious odour to all time. Oh! it is good to feel that our difficulties have been felt and mastered by the highest and noblest natures; that along this road, treading on the same briers with bleeding feet, resting wearily on the same milestones, looking to the same unhappy or happy termination of their journey, the high-souled long before us have come.

I have been led to write the foregoing by reading a portion of Hans Christian Andersen's "True Story of his Life;" in which story his difficulties, his successes, his hopes and fears, are simply and touchingly described by himself. He was born in 1805, in Denmark; and, at fourteen years of age, left his native place and journeyed to Copenhagen. For some years he had to struggle hard, but seems to have found sympathising friends from the outset. We should, I think, give free vent to the spirit within us, and not stifle the emotions of the heart, the exhibition of which is regarded only by the vulgar as

foolish. We are not built up entirely with food; the time arrives when that no longer avails to keep life in us. The energy, the genius, those higher and deeper feelings surely are of God, and have no root at all in our bodies of clay. Yet they are no less a part of our being: we may call them in fact our real selves, for only that or those we believe to be enduring can we look upon with the highest respect and love. Let us therefore, having this belief in the superiority of the spirit, give it the pre-eminence as much and as often as we can.

*Oct. 30.*—I am too easily depressed by the faintest shadow of failure, whilst, on the other hand, I do not find myself made joyful but by great successes. This is a disposition I must try and get rid of. There is a God above who works all events to suit His own grand designs—who, in the very moment of our greatest danger and misery, holds happiness before us, and showers blessings upon us. If we can be earnest and school ourselves, He will not withhold all-powerful help. To have a clear and

unquestioning belief in His ability and will to do us good, will render us happier and better, new nerve our mental and physical efforts, make a perpetual flower-garden of our hearts.

Genius has always had, and always will have, to struggle in pursuit of its vast hopes. Talent exists in all men; only the power of educating and cultivating these talents is required to abolish ignorance, and prepare the way for higher things. Genius appears in only a few favoured ones, and has no dependence at all on mechanical knowledge. It is Nature running with the life-blood from the heart through the body—the higher mind of man in conjunction with his heart. Shakspeare, Burns, and others, owed very little to schoolmasters or books; the “spark of Nature’s fire” truly compensated them for all accomplishments and acquirements, which the world values at such a high rate.

How wonderful Genius is! When I think upon those mighty names—not names, but realities—Dante, Shakspeare, Milton—I despair. They seem to be all giants of intellect and

heart, and we only their dwarfish descendants, walking beneath their colossal statues. Take them from the history of the world, imagine for a moment that they never existed, and we lose a precious part of our inheritance of mind. In our most depressed moments, a verse of theirs will arouse us to vigour and hope, or steal like ethereal music into our hearts, bringing sweetness and relief. Their words seem to have a heavenly origin, and are like the voices of angels calling to us to fulfil our duty and hope for the best. Here is a beautiful verse from the "Hymn on Christ's Nativity."

As a contrast, let me give a true picture of human life, when arrived at almost its lowest stage. A woman, whose husband is away in prison for twelve months, and who has a little babe of a few weeks old, totally neglects it, leaving it to others to take care of, those others being afraid to give it to the mother for fear that she might kill it. She wishes it was dead, as its life presents a feeble barrier against the tide of brutal depravity and vice into which she is plunging,

and means more to plunge into. The poor little thing's body is very frail, and it seems almost impossible to hope that it can be saved from death, even by great care. God help the poor little one!

Oh! what a glorious thing it is to achieve a conquest over one's own self—to master and terrify those evil, mean, petty motives and passions which we have inherited from our ancestors, and encouraged ourselves, and let—for it may be only a few moments—God into our hearts. Hydra-headed evils, which, in our selfish moments, lowered out portentously from the mist of the future, assume—when we have done what is beneficent and angel-like—a less severe aspect, or vanish altogether from our view.

*Oct. 31.*—"Our faith comes in moments, our vice is habitual," says the great American; these words run in my thoughts to-night. Sometimes we feel holy, or, rather say, have a tendency towards holiness; at other times we feel jaded, listless, and tired—unable to think or act save in a wrong direction.

Here is a thought of Mr. L.'s, which he laughingly told me to-day. He cannot admit the Roman Catholics to the night-school, partly on account of the insufficiency of room, and partly for religious reasons; and they clamour to be let in, but as yet without success. His wild notion was to get the roughs, whom he cannot find room for, to storm our place some night, knock us down (he might dispense with that), and play havoc with the things. One of our number to bring the police, and get the "ruffians" taken before the magistrate, who, expressing his astonishment at such an affair happening, should be informed by Mr. L. that only want of funds, &c., prevented education being given to all the roughs about, including the offenders. The latter, loudly declaring that they only wished to be educated, to be dismissed with a caution. Sensational articles in the papers the next day on the willingness of the roughs to be instructed, and the state of ignorance in the East End—great outcry, cheques, money, and clothes coming from all



quarters!!! Mr. L. is one of the most remarkable characters I have come across. He unites the simplicity of a child and the mirth of one with the most impracticable schemes that brain ever conceived. He has had a beneficial influence upon me in many things. I hope to paint in words his portrait some day.

*Nov. 3.*—What fearful depths of sin there are in us! To-night I heard the obscene remarks of little boys and girls of eight or nine years of age, and I cannot help thinking that the immoral, debased nature that produced those words, I myself possess, and all possess. It is sad to reflect upon the future of the little children around.

Brought up to gaze upon vice in all its attractive hideousness, and with no good presented to them by their parents or companions, it is not to be wondered at that they themselves become horribly deformed in their moral nature, and therefore in time horrid and loathsome in their aspect. I should shudder, standing on the bridge, so rotten, so little to be trusted, of the

and most squalid portions of great cities. These masses produce a generation that seems to have all the fiery impatience and prejudiced feelings of its progenitors with the sceptical, sturdy disposition of Englishmen. The lower Irish seem to be the sediment of society, and wherever the hardest and most obnoxious work is performed are to be found slaving their "heart's blood away," as the expression runs. They are very much attached to the "old faith," but they rapidly degenerate in great cities, and their descendants degenerate still more. The cause of the latter fact—the moral degeneration of the English-born Irish, I mean—seems to me to be very plain.

The Roman Catholic system of religion appears to me to be one of repression of the inquiring intellectual powers or faculties. It does not greatly approve of free thought. It lays undue stress upon the necessity of obedience, blind and unquestioning, and its adherents are therefore unreasoning, vehement, and impervious to all criticism or argument. In a Catholic

country, or as long as the system can maintain the supremacy or defend itself successfully against hostile attacks, the followers of the Roman Catholic doctrines are ardent and stubborn, firm as rocks, harder to be moved from the one belief of their life than mountains are from their base. But when in a country the people of which are disposed to remark with keen, unfriendly eyes and bitter tongues upon any shortcomings of those who may prefer an alien and suspicious belief, ready to depreciate its virtues and magnify its faults, their children are born and reared, it is easy to discover that the children growing up, and perceiving on one hand the ignorance of their parents, and on the other the malicious, critical, worldly spirit of all around, will very soon drift far away from the influence of the Catholic priests ; and despising, or rather regarding their teaching with contemptuous unbelief, be lost to the Papacy and to the good which is in it.

For they do not, as far as my experience goes, become members of any other religious sect or

party. They retain the prejudice of their fathers in favour of the old belief, without the ardent faith which alone made adherence possible or profitable. They hate and despise all who bear the name of Protestant, and still keep up an affection, in name only, for the unreasoning ways of their fathers. So they are lost between the two extremes; the only middle way they take is that of ignorant debauchery, hard work, drinking, fighting, and stealing. From the descendants of Irish people come the greatest criminals in England. The class known by the name of "rough" is composed mainly of them. Crimps, navvies, dockmen, hangers-on, &c., are the respectable classes springing from the large community generated in England of Irish parents. (Note.)—Prize-fighters are nearly always sons of Irishmen.

*Nov. 10.*—Reading: "Curiosities of Literature."

Two burials.—Alaric, King of the Goths, buried in 410, in Calabria. His followers diverted the course of the river Vasant for a

time, and buried their chief there with immense treasures. Attila, king of the Huns, was buried, with enormous riches, in 453, and all strangers who assisted at his funeral were put to death.

*Nov. 11.*—I saw my old beggar-man to-night, led by a boy who had in his hand a bundle, probably of broken victuals. He (the old man) must begin now to feel the inclemency of the weather. It seems matter for wonder to me that extreme poverty like his can manage to resist the terrible wind, snow, hail, and rain which make up an English winter. I suppose he makes up for it in comfort and luxuries (to him) at home. (Thought of picturing him in a story).

*Nov. 15.*—It is a truth which should give us intense satisfaction, that although we are destitute of the ornaments of life, although we seem to have no property in Nature—living as aliens on the earth's surface—we really and palpably have our foundations, physically and morally, in the material and spiritual world. All that is grand, all that is most elevating and sustaining,

we draw from the deep recesses of Nature in common with all men. No benefit that the hidden Ruler of the universe gives, is partial, or confined to this party or to that. Common shareholders; the same fund is left for the meanest and the noblest to draw upon; the same dividend is paid to the seemingly favoured and the seemingly cursed. We all "have shares in the planets." After all, the feelings and thoughts which a man so seldom gives out are the sterling golden part of his nature; the rest—eating, drinking, gem-hunting, house-building, hunting—being but the dross and refuse. I cannot describe the mighty influence which the angel-thoughts, so "few and far between," exercise upon my life and mind. When they take possession of me; when, half enraptured, I surrender myself entirely to their power, I know that I am living—that a few minutes before I was but an intelligent animal; that now I become by their influx and power of new-creating my soul within me—a man! Whirled round daily, thousands of miles, now with my head opposite

one mysterious star, then blindly and spell-bound yearning towards another, what have I to be so anxious about? In the midst of these systems of inanimate life for ever moving in their enchanted circles, I am but a speck—yet I shall live for ever! The wide earth holds enough nourishment for my intellect and body, pinched up in a peevish corner of this immense ball, why should I try to make my moan for such trivial reasons penetrate beyond the remotest stars? Why not bear patiently for a few weeks, or months, or years, the period of my imprisonment, conscious that the soul of a man, by the faith which God gives us, shall fill space and not be exhausted? “The sun shines on the just and the unjust.” The primal agent, so far as our knowledge can be of any use to us—of heat and organic life—is diffused among all, and brings a separate blessing, and a separate hope to each living creature.

*Dec. 1.*—Yesterday (Saturday) whilst on my way to Westminster, and in Fleet Street, saw Sergeant Bates (of the American army) who

had made a bet that he would walk from Carlisle to Guildhall, London, with the American flag, without its being torn from him, or without his being ill-treated ; those who betted against him, thinking that the supposed anger of the English people—consequent upon the Alabama affair—would cause them to show hostile feelings towards the stars and stripes. The result is rather unheroical—for, I believe, not one word of reproach or insult has been directed against the champion, who, on the contrary, has received ovations on the route. Yesterday, looking rather pale after his 300 miles' tour, he passed through Fleet Street, on his way to the goal, amidst enthusiastic mobs. We will not, cannot, be insulted ; in this spirit we show our high ancestry—our high destiny ; to come lower, the spirit of the great Newfoundland dog, as contrasted with that of the large, yet yelping, mongrel.

*From Sunday, Dec. 1, to Saturday, Dec. 14.*—  
So occupied that I could scarce find time to read a paragraph in the paper. Every day I



have had to control, single-handed, seventy or eighty children. The number on Tuesday afternoon last was eighty-five, and it reached that height again on Thursday afternoon. Then the night-school upon two evenings, Tuesday and Friday. Class of my own on Monday, and late on Tuesday night; besides a lot of incidental business which grows upon my hands; and, together with my desire to store a few facts away for the exam. next week, makes me go to bed with my brain confused.

*Dec. 12.*—The little girl referred to once before, has, for the last few days, been attending school, and behaves—all things considered—very well. It is a work of immense difficulty to get these children into habits of order and regularity. They are allowed to have their own way so much, and they get the upper hand so entirely of their parents, that the schoolmaster has uphill work to get moderate attention and silence from them.

*Dec. 19.*—Mr. S. died this day, aged only 36. He had been ill for some time, but

the end was not expected. He will "never preach in St. Peter's again."

*Dec. 20.*—'Tis always a melancholy pleasure to feel that, despite evil tongues, and hearts of base metal, clamouring against one in trouble, we have not joined *our* voice in the unworthy cackle; we have had the decency and respect to ourselves, as well as to the object of their malice, to keep from adding *our* mite of aggravation to the faults of the condemned (whether sentenced by opinion, justly or unjustly), but have rather wished him or her God-speed, for the sake of the good which we know to be in him or her, and remembering gratefully the indirect or direct good he or she has done us. This is especially the case when Death steps in so suddenly, and removes the butt of our unworthy jests, the mark against which all our arrows have been aimed. "We rapidly approach a brink over which no enemy can follow us"—the quiet, sad, Lethal grave.

*Dec. 24.*—I grow terribly weary, weary in body and in mind. The dreadful, weird phase

of un-civilisation presented ever to me makes me dejected—a dejection increased by my bodily languor. What avails it that this is Christmas Eve? What avails it that Christ, the noble-minded, the divinely-pure, was born as to-night, when I know that sin is in me almost too great to be forgiven; when I know that there are thousands of souls that reject and despise the hope of everlasting life, for the reason that they are not fit to live now? I pass through the filthy lanes, not in imagination, for I have been through them bodily just now, and I see, partly issuing from the depths of my own heart—for we are all centres of evil which we behold—the most squalid beastliness, oaths, quarrels, fights, drunkenness. To know that the image of God can fall below the level of the brutes, and ape their antics with hideous intelligence, is grief enough. To know that that state is its highest joy; to know that life in all its circle of intellectual and bodily pleasure holds no greater amusement or attraction, is enough to take the edge off all joy. At the best the life of these

people is very mournful. There is such an utter absence of any desire to achieve immortality to be discovered in them (the people). They pursue daily the same dull, never-thinking course of existence; the only variation to which they look forward being that of hard drinking. The children grow up just in the same way; at four years old they can "swear like troopers," very often being taught by their parents to do so. A mind is needed, so black, so misanthropic in its view of things, so used to fearful visions of the night, as to look with comprehensive and unflinching eye upon these scenes of sickly horror and despair. Then causing them to stand in all their ghastly deformity, it might make them appear subjects of wondering to all succeeding ages. I shrink, with no distrust of my own power, but with confidence that the theme is too hard, from the task.

There is no difficulty in noticing the more salient points; they stand in one's way; but to analyse the motives and thoughts of these people, so high above the angels, so far below the

brutes, is to set oneself the work of Dante, Shakspeare, Milton, and Plato; and, with all their power, fail.

Oh! seeing that our life is a thread easily snapped, a pitcher miraculously preserved from breakage hitherto, but destined too soon to be broken, let us awake, and claim our patrimony. Knowing that every hour brings us nearer to the house of dust, the earthly refuge of all living, let us ask God that, as our life has been up to this period dross and refuse, it may now be pure and beautiful gold.

The drunkards in the streets, the vile in their homes, make us tremble. The pure and holy simplicity of the Babe who was born *now*, contrasted with the sin within and without us, is startling. If ever we are to walk on our feet as men, if ever we are to attempt in ourselves the problem, too long considered as such, of regeneration, let us attempt it *now*. The hours carry away the minutes, and in the years are sealed for ever from us the precious months wherein so much may be done, so little is done. Oh! let

us make one giant effort, and burst the bands of habit and custom which have so long enthralled us.

*Dec. 24.*—Ben up.

*Dec. 25.*—At church till 2 A.M. this morning ; again at 8 ; again at 11, till 1.10 ; the consequence is that I am dreadfully tired. At this moment, 4 P.M., have just had an hour's rest.

*Dec. 26.*—At home all day ; beautifully mild. In evening went with Ben to Gaiety Theatre, and saw Toole in the character of Trotty Veck, and afterwards in that of Ali Baba.

*Dec. 28.*—I have been to-day poring over the old romance of the "Seven Champions of Christendom" in its complete form. It gives one an idea of those wonderful romances, incongruous in their character and events, which gave to the world a far greater work, and one destined to survive all changes of time and race. I mean the inexpressibly entertaining and genius-tinged "Don Quixote."

Wonderful in this romance of the "Seven Champions" is the way in which chronology is

set at defiance, and political geography totally ignored. A king of Jerusalem is introduced—a Jew, with the name of Nebuzaradan. A king of Arabia, the admiral of Babylon, and America is spoken of familiarly, at least, by the mention of the seven Christian kings, 1000 years before it was discovered, but by the mythology and antique adventures of the characters, one would say 2000 years before.

Christmas has once more passed away, and the brief season of merriment has given place to the yearning desire to know what good or ill awaits us in the new year. I used, when a boy, to look forward with eager and time-reproving anxiousness to the Christmas time as one of unalloyed pleasure. I couldn't crowd enough merriment into the one or two days, which is all the holiday that the poor can claim. Every Boxing Day found me full of sorrow that the wonderful time had passed away, and that for another twelve months things were to be dull and devoid of cheer and cheerfulness. The Christmas-tree standing upon the table would

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conjure up no end of pleasant visions; and to dispense the few poor presents hanging upon it seemed to be fit work for the hands of fairies and those akin to them in the enchanted world. Blind-man's-buff I was enraptured with; and, to sit by the fireside and eat roasted chestnuts, listening meanwhile for the loud reports of those that we had not cracked before placing them to roast, was no secondary delight. This Christmas I was alone, and had none of these once-loved delights; indeed, it is at the least seven years since I left the last faint longing for them behind; but this year especially I went not out, saw nobody, and yet was thoroughly content; I did not even taste pudding, that much-loved and better portion of every true Briton's dinner.

*Dec. 30.*—The poor people manage to lay in a good store of meat and drink, especially the last, for Christmas Day. How they can afford it is a matter of great wonderment to me; but the fact is they indulge in all the dainties that they can procure, at the expense of their income for the two or three weeks, if not months, following.



The very poorest and most abject among them would be shocked at the idea of not being able to have a good piece of roast beef, or pork, on the table, with one or two large puddings and a can of beer. Then they are at the zenith of happiness ; then they can afford to let loose the savage spirit within them, and the consequence is that fights are abundant. Boxing Day comes, and, perchance with broken heads and black eyes, they look in the cupboards, and see nothing but a few bones and fragments of meat and potatoes ; and only enough money in all their pockets to buy one or two mugs of beer to refreshen them after their excesses on the previous day. Then, till Easter, which in a minor degree is a carnival time for them, comes the long season of brutalising toil and unreflecting existence.

*Dec. 31.*—Letter from Rev. A. W.

1873. *Jan. 2.*—In the various calls to which I am subject, I have lost the opportunity of writing a few lines on the first day of this year, so must be contented if in any way I can

speak from the heart—can write with due solemnity of this solemn time. We look back on every year as it passes silently from us for ever, and we are almost always struck with the melancholy thought, nay, conviction, that little has been done within us during its course; that spirit has not gained many victories over matter; that we enter the new year with just the same apprehensions, as well as with the same hopes, never to be realised; that we take leave of the old year in a shamefaced, unfriendly fashion—scarce caring for his departure, knowing that he is tired of our frivolity, our inanity, our idleness, our ignorance, our sin.

Yes, looking back there seems nothing worth while recording. The dead, monotonous days stare us in the face with lack-lustre eyes. We have had our daily food; let us be thankful; but we are not hypocrites to ourselves always, so we are thankless. Why? Because we know that we don't deserve to live. We see no good results. Ah! we see too many bad ones—springing from our eating and drinking—so that

the recollection of dinners and suppers gives us pain.

We have conversed with friends. With friends? Not of the heart. Ah, no! not of the heart. We have had plenty of hand-shaking, but we knew by the averted eye and the enforced speech that our hands alone were grasped, and that along those secret paths travelled no tender emotion—no sympathy, no love. They touched not our life. They helped to stimulate us to earnest thought simply by their incapacity, by the utter absence of immortality that shone through them. We have been commended, perhaps praised. In that commendation and praise we revelled for a time; but when we summoned ourselves to *our* impartial tribunal, we would willingly have disclaimed all praise—would, only for our cowardice, have invited all censure. For we saw that, only so far as we can set the seal upon others' praise can we be free to enjoy that praise.

We have fretted and fumed about nothing at all. Trifles have caused us sleepless nights and

anxious days. Dreams tormenting and fearful, reflections from the troublous scenes of the day, have crept into our minds, and left their shadowy trail over our after-actions. We have been planning with infinite toil and trouble for years that we shall never see. At the end of a year then, considering these things, what more fit than to exclaim with the wise king—"All is vanity and vexation of spirit!"

*Jan. 4.*—Just outside is an organ-grinder playing melancholy tunes—himself perhaps homesick and unhappy; while eight or nine ragged little urchins are executing a grand triumphal march around him, going through at the same time the most grotesque gestures.

*Jan. 10.*—Yesterday morning died Louis Napoleon, Emperor of the French from 1852 till 1870. He had been ill for some time, and had had an operation performed upon him, from which good results were expected to follow—in vain.

It is impossible not to be struck with the contrast between poverty and luxuriant wealth,

autocratic power and individual helplessness, as displayed in the life of the ex-Emperor. For years his life was obscure, and his influence small ; for years he stood before Europe, and his name alone represented unbounded power and the most successful system of politics. The revolution of the 4th September—say Sedan—showed the rotten basis upon which the Empire rested—the shifting, passionate, adversity-hating nature of the French people.

If the Prince Imperial lives, he will go back to France. A cry will again arise for the Napoleons, sooner or later. All that they have to do is to wait. A nation that has had, within twenty-five years, one king, one emperor, and two republics, will surely find out before long that a change is required.

*Jan. 11.*—Letter to an individual advertising in the *Athenæum* for amateur authors.

*Jan. 12.*—The perseverance of the clergy in this part is astonishing ; the result of all their teaching, reiterated, pointed with darts of terror, and steeped in assurances of Divine love, is

inadequate to the labour bestowed and the pains taken. Mr. L. to-night was endeavouring to teach twenty rough lads—the eldest not more than seventeen—and with minute (the word I use advisedly) patience, couldn't, to my observation, get one thought into their minds respecting the great importance of life—its origin, its destiny, its progress.

One who lives amidst the courts and alleys of a great city, and sees the filth of human life that the very houses have in them ; one who can see, as I just now saw, girls of twelve and thirteen lost to all shame and decency, proceeding on their way to infamy, and no hope of a friendly hand to stay them in their downward path ; no hope, except perhaps for one or two, who will be as brands from the burning fire ; one who knows that, as rats undermine a building, squalid crime is at work upon the very foundations of morality and law, cannot, must not, till he has left these scenes for peaceful nature, be an optimist.

This question or that takes all our time and trouble. How much fever and ague we endure

in our efforts to set right wrongs that can never be set right, or evils that will quickly and surely—disdaining our aid—cease to be evils. The question of Reform—what an outcry! What friends lost to each other for ever! What enemies created with a single word! What processions of men, who don't care a button as to the issue of their demonstrations, so long as they can get extra money for beer! Reform! Once I thought in my simplicity when Reform was talked about, ere Palmerston had ceased to be, that it was a mysterious medicine to cure all evils afflicting the people. Reform! I heard such an outcry for it, and such an outcry against it, that I thought it meant great and noble things. Game laws abolished, the poor looked after, education extended, law simplified, and a system of brotherly love, which Englishmen appear to be deficient in, made the basis of all relations between class and class—say, man and man!

Great was my disappointment when I found it only meant that any fellow might have a vote

who possessed a pig or two, or who had just enough tiles over his head to constitute him a householder. I distinctly recollect that when first I heard really and truly what Reform meant, I was disgusted. What? such heartburnings and bickerings, party against party, friend against friend, a nation aroused, evil passions encouraged, and for no great end at all, but rather for a measure which, if it swamped us with a tide of democracy, as some predicted, was to be hailed by the high and the wise; and, if it did not, seeing that the honest and good already had votes, was an idle work of idle hands and empty brains.

With all its appearance of generosity, seemingly embracing all and every who had attained to manhood, it was narrow and restrictive; shutting out many who should have had votes, by right of education, by right of manhood, by right of position, by right of character. I can take my own case—not wishing to let this sentence have connexion with the last one or two—as an instance of its unfairness. Dick, Tom, and Harry, because they herd



in a couple of rooms, or even one room, have votes, whilst I have none. Because I do not pay the rent of my house personally, because it is reckoned as part of my salary, I should be laughed at if I entertained for a moment the idea of having a vote assigned me. But enough of votes. I did not start with the intention of writing about votes ; but, having once commenced, the thought required that it should be concluded, by showing an opposite case of the unfairness of a law, which once stood to me, ere it became a law, for a measure of right, of philanthropy, of universal good ; but which I dismiss with contempt, and with wonder that so much fuss was made about it.

*Jan. 12.*—What we want is a deep reform from within, a growing out from our souls of all precious, odorous virtues into our outer life ; a casting away of all filth, of all dead stalks and leaves of evil habits and customs, which we have allowed to accumulate, to our bewildered sorrow, for so many years—a lamp lit in our innermost recess, that shall pierce the thin covering of mortality, and show to unbelieving eyes that the soul exists,

and that consequently a God exists, worthy of all love, simply because He bestows it ungrudgingly, and regardless of position or character.

On too low a platform these spiritual essences dwell. In too gross an atmosphere the spirit attempts to breathe. We throw too many sops to Cerberus, we concede too much to our material nature, ever to persuade ourselves that we are spirits, ever to see with undimmed vision the land of our birth, the land of our actual life. Above us the ever-changing clouds; above us the rainbow all glorious and radiant; above us sweet, healthful rain; above us God's sun and moon and stars; above us the mysterious vault of heaven; below us nothing but sordid dust, save the bright flowers which even are but stars of the earth, and grow only because we walk with downcast eyes, that God may still spread truth before us. On every side, at this appalling depth, hatred and bestiality, and dead, corpse-like memories. Are we dreaming? Oh, brother! and oh! that brother of mine, so like me, who looks into my face sometimes with passions

terrible to behold, and unbelief and selfishness and cupidity—let us try and ascend a little step higher. To-morrow, if we are spared, let us behold the sun from a higher standpoint. To-morrow, let us see the stars a little nearer, and draw lessons of grandeur from them. To-night, let us cover our faces in our hands and weep over the ruins of our souls, which only we can rebuild and reconsecrate by the power and grace of the old Builder, who wept to see them laid desolate and waste by the noisome, corrosive, stubborn giants, whom we gave birth to, and nurtured so tenderly and impiously.

I have quoted, unabridged, and absolutely uncorrected, these out-spoken opinions—valuable both in themselves, and as coming out of what is the usually silent class—silent both because it is educated neither to think, nor to express its thoughts. Emphatically one of the people, born and living to the last among the lowest class of the people—this

man, with his rarely clear brain and righteous heart, pure from first to last, amidst surroundings absolutely unspeakable in their vileness, John Martin has a right to be heard. All the more that his voice comes out of the grave. He could have had no idea that this Note-book would ever see the light. Like many amateur writers, that which was most valuable he considered worthless, and rated far above this excellent prose the rather inferior poems which he sent me from time to time.

Among the earliest of these—that is, ranging from 1867 to 1870—the one I think the best, because evidently taken from nature and hard experience, is one which he did not send me; “Before the Gate of Death: Fragments of a Poem.” Its date is “Sept. 1869;” to it he has appended, with the date “Oct. 10, 1870,” a note.

“What a chance for some future poet!

Before the Gate of Death! The horrible, the quaint, the marvellous, the pathetic, the frenzied, the mysterious, the commonplace, the woeful stories, told in character by various individuals grouped around the portal, whence issues at times the Spectral Hand, cutting, or rather ending, the narrative. A shade of the terror belonging to the hereafter, with the vivid reality belonging to the earth and to the present. The cowering wretches, the awful scenes, the Rembrandt pictures, all requiring great genius for their true satisfaction and fulfilment. I only give the hint; Dante's Purgatorio and Inferno have not half the interest attached to them that would attach to this subject, masterly, pathetically, powerfully told."

BEFORE THE GATE OF DEATH.

FRAGMENT I.

Tell them I cannot come in just yet,  
If they open the door when I am gone :  
It is so cold and wet.  
D'ye hear? You in the scarecrow coat,

You with a face all scratched and torn  
In Time's wide thorny moat ?

"Tell them yourself." You seem to think  
That I have nothing at all to do ;  
I have to wait, and why not you ?  
"I'm thirsty, I must have some drink ;  
I'll not be long."—Well, just as you please :  
I'll state your case ; you may take your  
ease,  
But they'll find you and bring you in, my  
friend,  
At the end.

He's gone. Well, well, I am almost tired  
Of waiting about ; they'll never take me.  
So cold and cheerless, I almost doubt  
Whether my turn will ever be.  
The stars are gone to their misty bed.  
Why, look ! There is a Hand stretched out  
In the rain and the darkness—awful, dread ;  
I am almost inclined to flee.  
No, no. It has taken that man instead  
With the silvery hair and the reverend head.

And a voice cries in my ear,  
“ Wait in patience and have no fear.”

Well, well, I suppose 'tis no good plan  
To grumble and murmur; and if you can  
Keep up your courage and wait to see  
The ending of this great mystery,  
They'll think of the hunger and cold and  
wet,

And acknowledge themselves in debt  
To you, and to all who have patiently  
Kissed the thin lips of Misery.

Have you any idea of the place inside,  
You with your mouth so wide,  
Catching all the breezes that come  
As if each one was a sugar-plum?

“ Holy and blessed it is,” cried he,  
“ Full of sublime felicity,

Scorner and scoffer; watch and wait,  
Although thou art sinful, persevere:

Thy rags shall be changed into linen fine,  
And thou shalt drink of the heavenly wine;  
Thou shalt eat of uncloying food.”

A little just now would do me good.

Have you a coin to give away?

I have not broken my fast to-day.

“ So, so, you’re a beggar, perchance a thief.

You fellow ! it gives me alarm and grief

To be seen conversing with such a man.”

Gabble away as fast as you can.

You are well dressed.

“ Is that a cause

For a Christian to break his country’s laws?”

You have a gold watch. Pity me, pray,

I have not eaten of food to-day.

“ ’Tis nothing to me. I will not give

A single farthing ; for I must live

As well as you ; so let me pass.

I’ll go to the corner, and have a glass.

This wind blows cold. Ha, ha, your rags

Are swaying along like tiny flags.

Why don’t you work, you lazy dog !”

A hand comes out of the sullen fog—

He’s gone !



May the Lord not ruthlessly  
Inflict on him such misery  
As he and his kin would shower on me?

FRAGMENT II.

“ I was a child long years ago ;  
Never I dreaded want and pain :  
Laughed I in glee when the pattering rain  
Fell down, and the winds did blow—  
I stood at the window, and in delight  
Applauded each raindrop with all my might.  
While the poor wretches limped along  
Pierced by the keen and bitter wind,  
I danced and I sang a gladsome song.  
For why ? my heart and soul and mind  
Were young—so young, and I never felt  
The need of a philosophic belt  
To stifle my stomach’s groans of pain  
In the cold and pitiless rain.

“ But now the veriest foulest wretch  
Might in good fellowship outstretch  
His crimson fingers for me to wring.

Ah, yes, friend ! I have felt the sting  
Of hunger and cold and misery.  
The awful phantom of Poverty  
Has clutched me with his terrible hand :  
And weird Remorse with a rustling chain  
Forbids me ever to hope again.  
Ah, me ! even now I seem to stand  
Upon the brink of the bubbling hell ;  
But I cannot, I cannot, I dare not tell  
Of the sights and sounds that there abide ;  
Of the ghostlike sufferers standing bare  
In its poisonous, nauseous air.  
But other scenes and forms beside  
Attract mine eyes, for in the strife  
The burning torments, the misery  
Of that curst place I seem to see  
The black reflection of mine own life,  
Accurst of God."

" Oh, say not so,"

Our good friend whispered in accents low,  
And voice that spoke sincerity.  
" There is hope, bright hope, for you and  
me."

But he gazed at him with a vacant stare,  
And the rude winds did wave his hair  
Around his features, till it did seem  
As we were dreaming a hideous dream,  
In which some phantom with livid eyes  
Controlled our lives and destinies.

“Oh, no,” he cried with a gasping sob,  
And every word was like a throb  
Of his burning, bursting heart. “Oh, no!  
’Tis little use your telling me so:  
I can see my features in the fire  
That stands below, now higher and higher,  
Till the sad reflection is lost in smoke.—  
I heard a well-known voice—Who spoke?  
Silence! Oh! God, preserve my brain  
From madness. Oh! this racking pain  
That rends my heart in twain. ’Tis she,  
The victim of my great villainy.  
She comes with a horrible, dreadful sneer;  
Her face is very pale, but ne’er  
Can I discern a trace of fear.  
I kept her in awe one time. Now she—

Fiends, keep her back !—she approaches me.  
Lost, lost ! O God ! I'm mad—I'm lost !”

As some poor barque by tempest tost,  
Drifting about on the restless sea,  
At last is thrown upon a rock  
With a mighty and sudden shock,  
So fell he back insensibly  
Into the arms of our helpful friend.  
I my best assistance did lend,  
And lifting him gently we bore him away  
To an inn that stood in the great highway,  
Where he was well provided for.  
I had no money ; our friend did pay  
Freely and lovingly out of his store,  
And, as my stomach was empty, he  
Provided me food most generously.  
I pressed him to eat, and he complied,  
But, strive as he did, he could not hide  
An anxious feeling of deep unrest.  
He arose at last ; my hand he pressed,  
And kindly said,

“ I must leave you now.

Take these few coins and get to bed ;  
You are cold and weary, and I am strong.  
This house is famed for its homely cheer.  
Do not think I am acting wrong ;  
I shall not be gone so very long.  
At daybreak, if the Lord is good,  
I will break with you my morning's food.  
By that time our poor friend may be  
Able to bear us company."

"Nay, nay," I cried. "Why venture forth  
To brave the night's tempestuous wrath.  
'Tis raining so fast."

"So fast," smiled he.

"The rain and the wind can never stay me.  
What if my time be reckoned up,  
And I have tasted Life's bitter cup  
For the last time ? How sad 'twould be  
If I were not found patiently  
Waiting the hour, the silent hour,  
When God, in his strange, mysterious power,  
Has given the order to gloomy Death  
To gather my feeble and worthless breath,

My soul to be judged by the Book of Life,  
And cleared from the stains of sin and strife ;  
Take form as an angel bright and wise  
In the blessed garden of Paradise."

He moved to the door.

" O, my true friend,"

I cried, with mine eyes suffused in tears,  
" I will follow you, serve you, until the end  
Of my weak, repining, and scornful years.  
But I hope that with you I shall quickly mend  
My wayward life."

" Think not of me,"

He said, so sad and tenderly.

" Love God. Keep all the fiends of hell  
From entering thy soul's citadel."

So we went forth, after promising  
That we would return with the sweet day-  
spring.

Out into the black and loathsome night,  
Sheltering many a hideous sight,  
Many a deed of sin and shame  
That must remain without a name,

Until the seal of secrecy  
Is broken by strange Eternity.

So we arrived at the narrow lane,  
Leading into the awful space  
Around which the passions of life did chase  
Each other in grief and fear and pain.  
Through all the various grades that there  
Awaited their fate in anxious fear  
Before the mysterious Gate of Death.

Hot with each cruel pent-up breath,  
And keeping apart from the multitude,  
We ventured into a shelter rude ;  
Yet, not less kindly disposed to ward  
From my warm body the angry wind.  
My friend exclaimed—

“ O Blessed Lord,  
Who hast in Thy mercy been good and kind  
To give Thy servants the means so free  
To do a good act in honour of Thee,  
From the eyes of the mentally blind  
Thou hast taken the scales. O may he bless  
Thy power, Thy loving tenderness !

Take from the face of the suffering man  
That we have succoured this blessed night  
For Christ's sweet sake, the Devil's fan,  
Wherewith is conjured up hell and riot ;  
O fill his bosom with peace and quiet ;  
Let him be pardoned in Thy sight !''

Thus abruptly ends the fragment, which can hardly be called poetry, though there is a poetic idea in it, and one or two poetical pictures, vividly drawn. Up to this age, twenty-four, John Martin had clearly done nothing in verse which could justify the intense ambition which burned within him, and which, at any rate, comforted him through the darkness and weariness of his hard-working life. The following lines, dated "26 Nov. 1868," if also not what critics would call "poetry," are very real and touching :—



Some faint illumination of the ray  
That warmed the heart of Milton cheers my  
way ;  
And though the raindrops on my pathway  
fall,  
And woe and sorrow lengthen out my day,  
Yet the bright sun makes me forget them all,  
And all their obligations disobey.  
O Sun of Life, to meaner minds unknown,  
O Fire Celestial, burning all alone  
Within the heart's deep chamber, and with  
still  
Immortal rapture turning joy and moan  
Into creations of the mind that will  
To us for all our mournfulness atone.  
Still cheer me on my way ! Still bring  
to me  
Relief from all my pain and misery ;  
And shine with purer and with sevenfold  
light.  
O cheer my clouded way that I may see  
Through this dark, dreary, woe-begotten night  
A time of rest, a lifelong jubilee.

The "lifelong jubilee"—which, alas! comes to none—never came, even in the briefest form, to poor John Martin. To him existence—mere existence—meant incessant toil, amidst external circumstances as hopeless as could well be. True, he never again fell into that slough of despond—the impression and experience of which no doubt originated "Before the Gate of Death." The kind friends who then rescued never forsook him; but the struggle of life must still have been very hard. That he continued to write poetry at all, amidst his incessant work for daily bread, and his endless studies to qualify himself for earning it, is something marvellous.

Out of the quantity of verses I have gone through, from the date 1868 upwards, there are a few tolerably good: "The Dying Girl," "The Flute-player," "Death in Spring,"—it is curious how his mind perpetually runs

upon that death which was for ever present before him as a not-remote possibility, almost a certainty. These I shall give hereafter ; as well as a longer poem, "The Dead Poet," which is not devoid of merit, and is deeply touching now. But as a rule poetry which needs any apology had better not be printed. The world receives its literary wares, like all others, simply as wares—merchandise—according to their value, without taking into account any incidental circumstances of their production. I still think that a volume of "Poems by John Martin," even had it ever found a publisher, would have found so limited a public, that the agony of disappointed ambition might have proved sharper to the author than the pang of hope deferred.

1875. *Monday, Jan. 13.*—To-day I leave with some regret St. Agatha's, where I have

been working since June 4, 1870. Entering upon a new scene of work, though not many hundred yards away from my former place, I find I am like a dethroned king; the awful sceptre of power—the cane—I no longer wield, and, in one way, a capital thing too, for 'tis no pleasant thing to have to use it. Whenever I did do so, I fell in my own estimation from that philosophical height to which I aspired, and do aspire. Boys are untameable; I never found that the cane really did much good; whether I gave enough of it is a doubtful question. The teacher, however high his heart, however generous his motives, must ever appear to those under him as a tyrant, whose smile leads only to punishment. The teacher who should do his work honestly and perseveringly would be far above reward, for I assure those who never teach that it is fagging work to such an individual. One thing, he is very rare; for the head spins round, the heart gets discouraged, the body gets tired, the mind falls to the dead-level of childish ignorance when you endeavour to do your work

among seventy or eighty children in a close room, with no help. The one thing that really keeps the teacher on his legs is that the work doesn't last very long, and that only five days in the week are given to it. I am the second assistant in a school of eighty boys. There is very good order ; and now, with three teachers besides one or two monitors, we ought to get on very well.

*Jan. 15.*—Received a letter from the Amateur Authors' Association (advertised in *Athenæum*) ; but as the managers require a subscription to be paid in advance, and as there are a great many sham societies in existence, I think I will defer ambitious spurts in that direction and go no further.

*Jan. 26.*—The longer a man lives, the more experience he has, the deeper his conviction must be that, although he may be very fortunate in attracting the casual notice of those who may be supposed to belong to the high class in intellect, heart, and education, he never can attach them to himself ; he must fall back at last upon him-

self, upon that high heart which should be within him—his solace for all sneering contempt, for all the disappointments that daily life brings, like so many insects, to sting one's life away.

I long for a free and vigorous life—one removed from the depressing influences of poverty and dependence, one which would enable me to throw aside habits of self-distrust and awkwardness, produced only by the incessant necessity of suiting my behaviour and conversation to the requirements of this individual or that.

I admire the freshness and luxuriant freedom characterising Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, and would gladly live as they. A continual change from town to country, from the congregated masses of men to the solitary mountains, seems to me to be the ideal of happiness—at any rate for a time. Their absence from the petty cares of life I would gladly imitate, albeit I might have to encounter their perils, and be subject to the same delusions they were subject to.

The power of genius in creating a new and

enchancing world, into which out of the poor mean realities of the world we live in, we can gaze with delight and never-fading pleasure, is simply wonderful. I can relish a good novel now quite as well as I did ten years ago, although I may not find it so hard to get the books as I did then. In my round of pleasures, limited no doubt, but still as numerous as most people's about here, reading stands pre-eminently the first; and, although I am fond of history, biography, and poetry, fiction has my greatest and longest-lived love.

*March* 16.—Serious news respecting Ben, which news God grant may not be true. At Beckenham all the afternoon and evening; near Shortlands ran accidentally against Mrs. Craik, who was accompanied by 'some gentleman, and I asked them the proper route. Although Mrs. Craik assisted in telling me the way, I do not think she quite recognised me, as two years have elapsed since my interview with her. I just thanked them, and, being full of the business which had brought me thither, did not

think of "improving" the occasion by speaking a little more.

This is true ; I did not recognise him in the least. Two years, at his age, makes naturally a considerable change, and besides the young man had passed away from my memory amidst the crowd of literary aspirants to whom one can do no good, often much harm, unless they have in themselves the inherent power to rise. I never even heard of this rencontre until I read of it here, with a pang of deep regret ; yet with a still deeper respect for the reticent pride, which, under most painful circumstances, impossible here to disclose, made the poor fellow, overshadowed by a cloud not of his own creating, desire to remain unknown and unrecognised.

After this, there are many pages of the Note-book, so entirely impersonal and consequently uninteresting, that I shall omit



them. They consist chiefly of remarks on passing events, political and otherwise, criticisms on the books he read, and extracts. A good many of these latter are from Edgar Allan Poe, poems which he wished to preserve, and therefore copied out of books borrowed.

There was upon him at this time a heavy weight of domestic anxiety, humiliation, and pain, concerning which the journal is totally silent. But it is easy to see how the poor troubled soul took refuge in extraneous interests, the brain fighting against the heart, and trying to deaden the sting of pain by substituting totally different and outside things for the things immediately surrounding it. Indeed, throughout, this Note-book appears less as an expression of suffering than an escape from it into new regions and fresher air ; the only escape he

had from the foul atmosphere in which his life was doomed to pass.

*March 23.*—These are dull days for me. Now, in the zenith, if I may say so, of my years, and yet nothing apparently done, none of the bright hopes of youth fulfilled. The stoicism of the old Greeks was perhaps a real virtue; next to the sublime teaching of the Lord, perhaps the best. What would increase our happiness but the contempt of woe? what take away the sting of poverty and degradation but the conclusion that good is greater than evil, and is the only powerful and enduring agent? all ills serving it, and tending to illustrate it, and bring about its final triumph. Those old teachers, how inimitable they seem; how far above us, as above their contemporaries. Unless we blend with the higher civilisation and higher culture of our lives, some of their wild virtue, I am afraid we shall make little progress towards the goal of perfection. We are nursed too much in parlours and bedrooms. There is little true vigour

in our lives. One can predict, with absolute certainty of the prediction being fulfilled, the actions and course of life and thought of thousands. Here are no original men. Not that originality is a thing to be desired as possessing in itself all virtues, but that being conscious of the dead-level of ignorance and depravity in which men exist, we naturally associate the idea of originality with good ; that is, we think a man who raises himself above the dead-level of ill must be purer and better ; must, in ascending above the grossness of his surroundings, be coming a little nearer heaven. Nor are we wrong. How disappointing then to find no originality, to find the same description of men wherever we go. To find ourselves, having lost heart and hope, assisting in the masquerade of life, making the best of things, and " playing our cards," as the expression runs, to the best advantage. Always endeavouring to please with no honest motive, but with a desire to get credit for politeness and courtesy, feigning to be shrinking with humility, when all the time we are dis-

tended with pride ; laying little traps for applause which never satisfies us, for only when a man applauds himself can he be satisfied ; pledged to this mode of thought or to that, and content to be led by the nose, so that our mouths are filled. To be isolated—so far as conversation, acquaintance, and custom—from our contemporaries, yet never in sympathy, is a thing to be desired. Not to make oneself “cheap” is the common dictate of reason. Each should be able to say with Iago, though not in his villainous sense, “I am not what I seem.” Every man should have a chamber in his heart to which only God should have access. Ay, but if we had a friend, he might have access ; but let us be sure of his being a friend ; otherwise we are like a man who, on hearing burglars busy at his windows, gets out of bed, and, politely letting them in, goes to bed and sleeps.

We are taught at last. We must be devoid of common understanding if we do not perceive that, to have a footing in the world, a man must push and scheme, must lie in wait and be patient ;

must—if the Spirit of Truth guides him not—trick and lie. So, if a man wishes to avoid the perturbations of life, he must learn the lessons which are daily set before him, and hear, in the midst of jangling notes of penury and of sin, seraphic strains of richness and purity. Only, like a plant which grows outward, he must count upon good, in proportion as it grows from him and his position, and not expect to see good from evil, any more than he would expect to see good fruit from a rotten tree. This is the lesson he must learn, to purify the mental atmosphere of all gross clouds which may discharge themselves in the rain of angry, unseemly words, or in the snows of doubt, or in the hail of violence, or in the cold of death, and so make the climate in which his virtues are to grow bright and delectable; also to have ever in his soul the Sun of Righteousness, and the clear moonlike rays of reason. Quitting similes, to preserve that insular independence, which preserves a man eventually from well-merited jeering and contempt, and enables him at the present to be free in ac-

tion and conscience; and also to work silently, first, for the regeneration of his own ruined nature, and secondly, for the regeneration and earthly well-being of the human race.

*March 24.*—A fine sunny day. On such a day as this one thinks of the country and longs to be far away.

*April 2.*—I wrote "Wednesday," but have nothing to say after it, so busily are my thoughts engaged in other directions. One thing and another turns up to hinder me in my schemes of study, so that even when I have a little spare time, I grudge to give it to this Note-book, so urgent are the demands upon me to "read up." After all the N. B. can wait, for it is only the infirm scaffolding by which I propose (remembering at the same time, with humility, the old saying) to build a house by-and-by, of eloquent words, representing no less eloquent thoughts, those words of the Mind's Twilight. I proposed only in this book to enter thoughts which might become too burdensome to be safely kept in the mind, for it does these real things

good to be set free, and they were made at first to be communicated for the good of all who had hearts and minds to receive them. Alas! why should I speak of thoughts; birdlike, musical, spiritual thoughts, I have few or none. But I entertain an expectation that they will visit me at intervals, and give me joy in their presence, initiating me into a few of the hard problems of life, and enabling me, while knowing myself, to subdue the evil agencies which are at work within me, and which threaten day after day to destroy my expectation of eternal life.

*April 3.*—Letter from Rev. A. W. in reply to mine of 1st. To get another in a few days.

*April 4.*—Letter from Rev. A. W.

*April 5.*—Received first half of Exhibition.

*April 12.*—No news of any importance.

*April 13.*—Easter Sunday. Many have said to me to-day, "A happy Easter to you;" but I cannot think that an extra feeling of joy should pervade us on this day more than on another day. We should always carry within us the joy of resurrection, as well as the sadness and gloom

of death. Because we have ended the season which especially reminds us of Christ's sufferings, are we to let those sufferings entirely out of our minds? Nay—are we only to dwell upon them in a less degree even? I think not. I suspect that many who are speaking about Easter joy would, if they were able to analyse, find that much of that joy springs from a feeling of relief that the rigorous season of Lent is over, and that the body may again be pampered—not from a sincere conviction and a hopeful joy that the Redeemer has “opened the gates of heaven to all believers,” after having “overcome the sharpness of death.” The words of the fine Puritan poet, George Wither, express the prayer of all true believers, and run in my head at the present with more than their wonted attractiveness.

Oh! keep the morning of His Incarnation,  
The burning noonday of His bitter Passion,  
The night of His descending—and the height  
Of His Ascension, ever in my sight;  
That, imitating Him in what I may,  
I never follow an inferior way.



*April 14.*—Took a walk to see Ellen, but she and her husband had gone out. A fine spring day, and everybody appeared in holiday dress and spirits. London is almost hateful to me in its monotony. I can't bear to walk through its streets, merely for the sake of a walk, for I have travelled along them with anxious heart and pain many, many times. Some few times I have trod them in company with those who possessed the power to make all scenes attractive, but these companions are far away. Therefore I had rather be indoors, bookless and companionless, than pace through dreary streets alone.

*April 16.*—No amount of poverty or sickness can take away the joy which a genuine poet and a true lover of poetry feels in his own compositions—crude though they may be—and in the productions of the highest servants of the Muses, productions which he regards as the grandest results of man's grandest faculties. The belief of the poet in his own power, in the undeveloped resources of his intellect and heart, is unlimited. Times of doubt there may be,

times when he is almost inclined to burn all the productions of his that have found their way to paper, and write no more ; but what art has not sometimes the effect of making its servants despair ? He knows, maugre all vexatious disappointments, that the pursuit of the beautiful thing has called forth all that was immortal in his nature, and he does not hesitate to affirm his conviction that he may yet catch, if only for a moment, that fleeting phantom form ; that he may write one or two verses breathing genuine inspiration—how, or when, he does not care, so that he may be fairly entitled to the honourable name of “ poet.”

*April 17.*—Walked up to College, and visited the New Free Library and Reading Room opened by the Corporation of London. The Library is a magnificent hall, and there is a collection of autographs of interest : a letter of Napoleon III. to the city of London ; two autographs of Oliver Cromwell ; one of the Duke of Buckingham, relative to the Fire of London ; and one of Warren Hastings. In

the evening attended "Readings from Tennyson," by Dr. Bennett, a minor poet, but was not satisfied either with his selection or his manner of rendering—so left early. Left him reading "Dora," which I confess to having an aversion for. Tennyson is a poet, but a great deal of his verse I can't relish.

*April 18.*—At home all day. In the evening up to College, and to Newling's. (Newling, by the way, has been dead these three years.)

*April 19.*—Indoors all day with a dreadful cold.

*April 20.*—Ben up. Went with him to George's house, and stayed the evening.

*April 21.*—Cold better. Work recommenced.

An optimist I can't be. In quiet moments, when thought is busy within my brain, I see on every side so many disappointing things, so little to be proud of, that a feeling of intense disgust steals over me. Well, well, let us try and make the best of life while it is within our reach—that best, not to stand in the same predicament with Epicurus, who, asserting that

happiness was the grandest thing in life, was used as an authority for vice and luxury—consisting in wisdom, the seed and the flower of Truth and Virtue.

*May 22.*—Saw in Whitechapel a man to whom I had not spoken since 1866, whom I had not seen since that time more than twice. He appears to be getting on very well, as the phrase runs, and “posted” me up in the progress of several mutual acquaintances. Alas! I am not getting on very well. I am afraid if ever I see success, it will be too late to afford me any happiness.

*May 23.*—Mr. C., my fellow-assistant, left this day for a new scene of labour at Dunstable. Always there is a melancholy feeling when we part with anybody we have been accustomed to work with.

*June 23.*—For the first time since 1864, and then only for a few moments, I saw good Mr. Rowley to-night, and shook hands with him. He preached at St. Peter’s, for the S. P. G. It does one good to see old faces that arouse the

very best memories of perhaps, in reality, an uncomfortable past, a past that was all bitter for us, though now strangely tinged with romance and beauty. I think our school-days are the most perplexing days of our lives. School appears to us in our boyhood a close, noisy place, to be shunned if possible. In after days, we cannot tell how, it assumes in our imagination the most roseate and golden hue. I can't see much romance, nor can I see much to disgust me, in my school-teaching work; but my own past school-days appear all golden, and everything connected with them objects of wondering interest. If it were not for a certain cynical spirit that gets the better of me now and then, I could almost hug the most unsavoury of schoolmasters, and this feeling increases every year.

*June 25.*—Up to Westminster. Walking along the Embankment, on my way home, saw the steamer on board of which was the Shah of Persia. To-day he has been down the river in great state, and to-night there is a ball at

Buckingham Palace. If a monarch may represent his people, which many doubt, it cannot be denied that the Shah represents the wealth and the magnificence of Persia, since he carries nearly all the wealth of that impoverished land with him. He dazzles the eye with precious stones. The papers state he had devoted to his European tour £5,000,000 of "pocket-money."

*Thursday, June 25.*—Parted with Edith.

This "Edith" was only a little child, daughter of Martin's second sister, now dead. There is no record of his ever having had any "love affair," any attachment or engagement. Nor does anything in his writings infer this. While the brain is keenly and incessantly exercised, I find little or no trace of anything like human passion or personal emotion. In truth, no woman that he was ever likely to have been thrown into contact with, could have become the ideal of such a

man. Among all of his poems I find only one, which fairly can be entitled a love-poem. It is dated "Spring, 1870."

A FAREWELL.

I shall ere the Autumn  
Stores her golden fruit,  
Lie beneath the green grass,  
Motionless and mute.  
One last word, my Celia,  
And contented I,  
With thy kiss upon my cheek,  
Shall in quietness lie.

Hast thou loved me, Celia ?  
O my little one !  
There is not thine equal  
Underneath the sun ;  
Hast thou loved me always,  
As I have loved thee ?  
Speak and let thy silver voice,  
Cheer and comfort me.

O my heart's true darling,  
O my hope and life!  
All without thy border,  
Danger is and strife.  
Pure and dainty maiden,  
Loosely robed in white,  
Thou art my protecting shield,  
And my spirit's light.

You remember, darling,  
One brief year ago,  
We beside the streamlet,  
In the summer's glow,  
Walked : I saw the crimson  
Tell-tale on your cheek,  
It was not the sun's red beam,  
Was it, darling ? Speak !

No, the leaves did whisper  
Our eternal love,  
And the feathered songsters,  
In the sky above,



Sang and twittered gaily,  
While my heart was pressed  
Close, so close, my darling,  
To your stainless breast.

In the long hereafter,  
Think of me, and when  
You retrace your footsteps  
From the haunts of men,  
To your own bright mansion,  
In the heavenly air,  
Seek me, O my Celia!  
For I shall be there.

One last kiss. Remember,  
Years and space are long;  
My love shall not weaken,  
Will yours be as strong?  
Go not yet! Our compact,—  
I shall press my claim:  
Farewell, love, my spirit lives,  
Dead and waste my name.

“Celia” is also the name given to the

woman who comes and weeps over the "Dead Poet." But beyond this I have no clue to the history of the life departed; except the united testimony of all friends who knew the man, that it was a life absolutely stainless, though in an atmosphere of almost universal vice. But as all his writings indicate, sin was to him no temptation; only an agony, a horror, a disgust.

*Tuesday, July 8.*—Entered upon my new school yesterday, and have never felt so unwell for a long time as I did then and do now. We have 170 boys; and the weather is awfully hot and close.

*July 13.*—It is our fate at certain periods of our life to come—as far as our highest pursuits, our noblest hopes go—to a complete standstill. If we could only concentrate our faculties upon that visionary work, which all men, in common with ourselves, consider will bring them fortune, if not fame, we fancy we should be happy and

ready for the work ; our good genius puts other things in our way, and we seem for a time to have left behind and forgotten the purpose of our life, and to be in eager pursuit or dull contemplation of some mere material thing.

How hard it is to write from the heart ! In my hours of solitude, of illness, of indolence, poems of beauty, words of splendid texture, float through my brain ; when I am active and sit down to write—gone are the poems ! dull are the words ! If only I can purge my heart of gross passions, and invoke the aid of that pure Inspirer of the “Paradise Lost,”\* I shall not long have to wait for thoughts, for words ; they will come like birds that nestle beneath the eaves of the commonest houses, for beneath the roof of the poet’s brain Jove dwells.

*July 17.*—Letter from R. H., who is at Gravesend. Letter to R. H., soon after writing

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\* Which he had lately read, and criticised at length. This criticism, with many others upon well-known works, I have omitted.

which, I heard a knock at the door, and who should it be but R. H.? Spent the evening together.

18 and 19.—Saturday and Sunday at Richmond. A nasty cold unfits me for any work.

20 and 21.—Completely prostrated.

*Wednesday, July 23.*—Have felt a little better to-day.

*July 26.*—With gratitude I note that, up to 18th of next month, I have no school-work to do. Our holidays have commenced. The strain of teaching upon body and mind, especially during the two or three hot weeks, has been very severe; the rest and change which I shall endeavour to get will be very welcome to me. To lie down among the dry grass, among flowers, far away from noisy, smoky London, is the blessing that God gives me once in the year. Ah! sorely do we need new-creating; sorely do we need that feeling of abandonment, that feeling of solitude, wherein we find the sweetest companionship; that purer atmospheric air—ay, and that subtle air which bathes the spirit as with cool waters of

repose, and comes only from God. A long walk into the country is delicious to the town-abiding, sedentary man. He sniffs the untainted air, and views the flowers, plants, trees, and other things around him, as if they were only new-made things made for his sole delight. The quaint old inns he loves, nestled, as some of them are, in quiet, mossy nooks; the ale, too, is delightful, after a long, dusty walk; so are the numerous episodes and scraps of conversation he has on the road. He enters rare old towns, and visits the remains and memorials of past ages. Besides all, he is exercising his body as well as his mind, and is leaving all his petty acquaintances far in the depths of London, or at some crowded sea-side place where they experience no delight, and bring away no pleasant thoughts.

*July 27.*—Only when we are in the depths of affliction's waters, when the Future stands with no smile nor welcome before us, when we are overshadowed (in truth) by God's wrongs, do we get an idea of the spark of Divinity enshrined within us. I write this with a few days of hap-

piness stretching delusively before my eyes, but I have experienced the reality and truthfulness of what I assert many times. Our prosperity is very often based upon the satisfaction of our physical wants; we seldom, if ever, are happy, because we have nourished our souls, or held converse with the spirits of the lofty of all climes and all ages. It is because we have had a good dinner that we laugh and sing; because we have quenched our thirst that we are ready to give the good word or the sweet smile; because we are going to this party or that, on this tour, or to that gay sight, that we feel contented and gay. So that our material prosperity covers our spirits, and gives them no opportunity of displaying their healing and satisfying power. We can enjoy life, possessing the outward things of life: without them, and we ourselves and the people around us dream not of the existence of these cooling wells of immortality lurking half-checked within us. Strip from us some fair day these tinsel rags—take from before our earthly

eyes false friends, good food, dainty drinks, fine houses, broad lands, and, turning our eyes wearily inwards, we shall tremblingly behold in the darkness the diamond-like glitter of the spirit, yet with eyes too much blinded by sensual delights ever to become accustomed to the darkness—ever to perceive the origin of that which so much astonishes and dazzles us.

*July 28.*—Beckenham.

*July 29.*—Indoors all day.

*July 30.*—A walk to Westminster.

*Aug. 7.*—I fill up the blank from July 30 to Aug. 6, as follows:—

*Aug. 1.*—Chertsey, Blackwater, Hartford Bridge.

*Aug. 2.*—Basingstoke, Popham.

*Aug. 3.*—Winchester, Otterbourne.

*Aug. 4.*—Southampton, Botley, Bishop's Waltham.

*Aug. 5.*—Alton.

*Aug. 6.*—Farnham, home.

I have had fine weather all through, but the

state of my health has not been satisfactory. Unwell when I started away, unwell I remained all the time ; the change, I hope, will eventually benefit me.

*Aug. 12.*—Perhaps of all sufferings, of all the torments which poverty, pain, crime, and degradation bring, none equal in intensity and some sickening power those which assail the man who, conscious of genius, desirous of undying fame, full of noble thoughts and hopes, sees the years gliding away, life becoming sterner and more material, and never an encouraging word, never a spirit akin to his own, never an outstretched hand, to give him assurance of final success. How often is he compelled to devote all his energies to the prosecution of plans which enable him only to earn a miserable pittance. How often does his whole soul revolt against the crushing iron prison walls, which, like the iron walls in a grim story, get closer and closer every day, until he is crushed—to no purpose. Ah ! these secret pangs which almost wrench God away from the heart, and turn the smiling earth,



with all its flowers and streams, into a horrid wilderness, are his, and his alone.

Into our hearts, sick with hope deferred—into our lives, almost fallen into the “sere and yellow leaf,” what words of balm shall be poured? I suppose, after all, life has its secret compensation for all, for the gifted and for the boor. In the night-time, dark and dreary, what bitter and hopeless visions arise, which the morning sun scatters like mists from our minds—so it is with us. For all our pain, hope exudes from every plant, exhales from every breeze, warms with the sunbeams, penetrates the most remote recesses of our hearts, and for ever bids us make one more effort, and trust to God and to ourselves. Let us take the scattered links, and, piecing them together, look upon them as earnest of success. Strive in the early dawn, and at noon, and at eve, and at night, to render our souls as they were given to us—white, and unconscious of ill. Strive with patience, yet with inspiration’s breath, to follow our ideal, to be perfect in the art which we aspire to make our own, whether it be

music, or sculpture, or painting, or poetry. . Fear not the Muses, nor court their favour, nor lash thyself into fury by external means, since Castalia, and Orpheus, and noble things dwell under thy own roof, in thy own heart, and to them, to it, thou must appeal. It really matters little whether we be born in stables or in luxurious beds, since we equally inherit that power which caused Eurydice to ascend from Pluto's mansion ; which, working through the hands of Phidias, astonishes even now ; which dazzles us in the pencil of Michael Angelo ; breathes delicious odours from the pages of Shakspeare and Milton, asserts itself in common life oftener than we think.

*Aug.* 15.—Reading Vol. I. of “Life of Dickens,” by Forster.

*Aug.* 17.—Ben up. Walk in evening. Christ Church, morning.

*Aug.* 18.—This day resumed school duties, and also removed myself to 14, Church Terrace, Poplar, close to my new “sphere” (to use a common word) of work. Duly let me keep in view the purpose of my life, undisturbed by

change, or other people's petty, bustling ways, and I care not. Thank God, my health is much better.

*Aug. 20.*—Reading, in a leisurely manner, Dante, for the third or fourth time.

*Aug. 23.*—Grandmother very ill. Slept at Bevan's.

This was the old woman whom I saw standing, in the quiet tearlessness of old age, beside John Martin's body, as it lay on the floor in Bevan's—his brother-in-law's—room.

*Aug. 24.*—Walk with George.

*Aug. 26.*—School excursion to Erith.

*Aug. 30.*—At home. Ben up.

*Aug. 31.*—Grandmother better. Had supper at Bevan's.

*Sep. 1.*—There is a time which comes to every man—sometimes at short intervals, sometimes at long ones, but still certain to come—when he begins to ask himself to what effect he has lived ; in what manner and to what extent has he pur-

sued the one purpose which every man is supposed to have at heart—that hidden purpose which enters into all our dreams, all our thoughts, all our hopes; the absence of which, or the death of which, would be the signal for our life of endeavour to cease.

The heart-breaking confession ever on our lips, giving the lie to the self-reliant bearing we exhibit to the world, mocking the faint smile in our almost tearful eyes, is that hitherto we have been unsuccessful. Heavens! when we compare our situation of the present with that of the past, making every allowance for the present, and trying to render thankful hearts to the Disposer of all events, we have need of all our courage. It is fearful to see life gradually passing away from us, and to find ourselves mentally, morally, physically, socially, so little advanced. The precious moments that flit by us so rapidly are seeds, which with planting and tending would yield golden harvests, but—mentally. If one of the greatest philosophers that ever lived described himself as being merely in

point of knowledge on a level with a boy, who, by the seaside, dips his cap into the water—the vast ocean before him—so we may well, with our caps so leaky, with our little stagnant ponds as full as ever, maugre all our drinking, regard ourselves as knowing, not comparatively, but positively, nothing. The thoughts that phantom-like rise at solemn moments in our minds, are merely the souls of the men of old—they are none of ours. The most commonplace idea we have no strength to analyse; the delicious or subtle comparisons of the poet we enjoy not, nor understand. In the loftiest oratorio, the music suggests things that we have never seen, and cannot account for. “The consecration and the poet’s dream” are to us subjects of ridicule, of course through ignorance.

*Sept. 2.*—My health, which for the past two weeks has been very good, is not so well, owing to a cold.

*Sept. 4.*—The bells ringing just now will go to no other words than “Dost thou come to

school? Dost *thou* come to school?" and "*Do you come to school?*"

*Sept. 28.*—I require more society and less studying. My brain gets in an enfeebled state at times in consequence of the amount of, not intellectual brainwork, for that would give me pleasure, but dry, almost useless, stuff, that I am obliged to dignify with the name of learning. Last week I did not know what to do with my shaky head; and although at present, having had a few hours' walking, I feel better, know that the coming week will bring me the same monotonous tasks. Courage! Courage! Courage!

*Oct. 10.*—To go through a long probation—a probation often of many sorrowful years, passed among the unknowing and ignorant, is the lot of him who aspires to have great influence over men's minds—or, in a less degree, who wishes to become acquainted with all kinds of men, and to study the varieties of character presented by them; for the knowledge of God and the

knowledge of man are the only two kinds of knowledge that we really require; all other kinds being merely elementary and introductory. Hence the only value of education is that it tends to bring out, or educe, the faculties of the mind—those faculties whose proper use is merely to study man. Hence the reason that people complain of the insufficiency of education, of its inability to produce good and lasting results, the reason being that education is an art almost unknown. People think that education is the work of the schoolmaster, that with him it begins and ends, little thinking that with him it has never yet begun. I am ashamed to think of the time that is spent over this work of education, which gives us very little more in a man than the power to scrawl his name. The only value of arithmetic is that it tends to exercise the thinking and reasoning powers, so as to give those powers the opportunity of being themselves exercised upon man. The only use of spelling is to give us access to the minds of

the noblest, so that we may take advantage of their knowledge of men, in the absence of our own knowledge.

*Oct. 19.*—Tom Turner home; slept last night at his house. The doctrine of the Stoics—if I take their doctrine aright—that it matters little whether we have prosperous or adverse days; that the mind or soul of man constitutes his best estate, and that riches and friends and happy days are to be despised, and give place to calm, patient endurance and rough virtues, has a great charm for me. I need some such doctrine; for something or other is always turning up to cause me annoyance, anxiety, if not actually sorrowful despair. I begin to have that “terror of cloudless noon,” which Emerson speaks of, and cannot conceive it possible that a month can go by without some bad news, calculated to damp my spirits and make me very old.

I am seldom deceived in this melancholy expectation; it generally fulfils itself in some disagreeable shape or way. It has taken a very bad



one now ; but even diaries must not contain everything.

One thing—and here is the mysterious circle referred to in a former page—these alarms are so incessant that one actually gets used to them, and takes them quite as a matter of course. The soul is always armed against them. The pioneers, exposed to raids of savage enemies, they know not at what time or in what manner, come to regard them as of no more importance than the sting of a bee ; for weapons are never out of their hands, and their eyes never closed. This is the only way of comfort that we can perceive. The fact is that the soul dwells constantly in that higher atmosphere, whence it can behold danger without dreading it. If we forgot the evils as soon as they had finished afflicting us ; if we did not still retain, after they had gone, the warlike attitude which we presented to them, why then the succession of shocks, we being unprepared, would in time destroy our vital power, and cause us to die suddenly and shockingly.

And yet—for two sides there must be—it is very depressing to be always in expectation of some disaster, to think that one's sky is too clear, and that the small cloud, not possibly may, but *must* rise; to act the part of Damocles, waiting in sometimes speechless terror for the blow to descend. As a clergyman remarked to me some time ago in forcible, if not elegant, language, "it takes lots out of one," this dreary feeling, for we draw upon all our resources to meet coming evils. The food that we eat in the present really is devoted to sustain the future, so that we live two lives at once.

To the thinking man there is always something dreary and melancholy in life. Our protesting, materialistic age, unbelieving and doubting, is partly to blame for this; for the "higher hope," which now we do not possess, "would abolish despair." We grow weary of life; we do not enjoy half our days; and life in the present age, destitute of that calm reliance upon virtue and the gods which the grand heathens possessed, and of the hopeful, loving trust in God which

the Christian should possess, is too serious and too solemn in all its relations and ways of being looked at, to be enjoyed. The thought that made even the barbaric Xerxes weep, creeps into our heads when we behold a rich and gay company. The smile across the face of the beautiful girl, what is it that we should be enraptured with it? Underneath that layer of soft flesh what ghastly framework rests! Our friendships, the dearest that we have, are as melancholy as anything in life; for if we love our friend, and he us, how the absence of a letter from him, or a ghastly dream about him, leads us to think, with something like an agony of tears, of his death; his unfaithfulness is just as bad in its effect upon us.

*Nov. 4.*—We cannot be of one mind always. It is good for us that we cannot, and also bad. The moment of sublime thought, of noble resolution, it is sad for us to see pass away, and a time of selfishness succeed; but that time of selfishness, ay, of reckless sin, has to give way, in God's mercy, to a period of purer thoughts

and deeds, so that compensation is made. I have no thought to-night. I sit down purposely to write, and not one single idea comes uppermost in my mind. "Barren, barren," I must perforce cry. Yet it is not actual barrenness, but the absence of the life of thought, the fire of ideas, the subtler essence of that subtle essence which condescends to house itself under my brain-roof.

Nov. 28.—Another milestone on the road of life. I am twenty-six years old to-day. The precious time is slipping away, a stream on whose banks beautiful flowers grow, that I cannot pluck; for I am hurried on to that vast eternity, that wonderful existence which enters into the composition of all our dreams, to which our tired and hurt spirits mutely appeal for justice and for sympathy, which is a problem ever waiting vainly to be solved by us, which no one has, up to this time, had the power or the will to solve. Before that vast thought—namely, that of man's immortality—all earthly hopes and fears seem utterly ridiculous. As, after gazing

at the stars, the things around us seem pitifully small, so after pondering on this illimitable future, the present seems hardly worth while troubling our heads about. In presence of the destiny which awaits every man, what is the use of fretting and scheming for the best place, or the best dinner, or the approval of our neighbours, or the downfall of our enemies? Why not live in a tub, or walk bareheaded and barefooted, so we can lengthen out our happiness, and shorten the pain that we cannot avoid by entertaining the vision, so soon to be a reality, of our ultimate and everlasting felicity?

In the rush of life—for the oldest and the wisest, as well as the youngest and most foolish, are like boys, who, seized by a sudden whim or panic, run headlong without thinking of any goal—sometimes it is given to a favoured one to stop suddenly; how utterly foolish the hurry and bustle appears then. Why one could laugh till Nature grew weary, to behold this onward, tumultuous march, which brushes down the weak and the unresisting, and in the end has

"vanity and vexation of spirit" staring it in the face.

Diogenes, Democritus, and the like, stopped suddenly, and you can see what they thought of this hasty, undisciplined mob. One looks sour and gloomy, as a man whose patience is quite exhausted, and whose heart is turned to a stone by poverty and coldness; the other's face is a square, with grotesque grins of good-humoured contempt. He now conceives that Nature worked originally this way, and flew in all her atoms to one common centre, and he does nothing but laugh to see the inspired atoms performing the same trick.

There are many who do not stop, but without having any desire to leave the throng, attempting to stem its too quick progress, wave their hands in a feeble manner, and rave about the stupidity of the people they are thrown among, and lament the golden age.

The word which in these days especially has had the effect of a panic is "gain." At sound of that all control is lost, and be we never so

quiet and cool before—parson, peer, peasant, poet—all bang and clang horribly together in that narrow channel with such high banks, which is so hard to escape from.

Of course, as the Concord teacher says, riches are proper to man ; they confer, at any rate, a second-hand power which represents, however feebly, the original force and mastership in Nature every man ought to possess. But this idea is not entertained for a moment by the majority of those who grind in the mills of self-interest and self-advancement. They grant you that riches are good for man, but will make them to be *the* good of man. Nothing is so despicable and criminal as poverty to them. A sovereign in the hands of a man with a suspicious coat throws a radiance around him, which no virtue, no noble act of his, could ever throw. He stands then on a level with all those who have a sovereign in their pocket, be they good or bad ; he yields only in dignity and worth to the honourable man who has two sovereigns, and thus in the course of our ascent

from a farthing to a million of pounds, we range from utter soul-sickening depravity to goodness worthy of canonization; only our good friends have exploded that idea, and say very little about the goodness—the gold is quite enough for them. But I have wandered far from the representation of that idea which ever haunts me, which steals into my mind at meal-times, which makes my brain whirl in the dark and solemn hours, which has forced me to seize the pen now, the consciousness that life, with all its wealth, all its possibilities and fatalities, is stealing gradually away, and that the horizon of happiness, of success, is ever flying from before me, and leaving me far, far, too far away from hope and faith, making my life sensual and selfish, and devoid of noble aims.

Towards sublime ends my thoughts and actions tended; but winged arrows as they were, they have fallen short of the mark. I shall never be able to pick them up and use them again—for me they are useless. Out of my soul, if God descends into it, as into my



young soul He did, may go forth to the great future, sweet inspirations, yearnings of the undying spirit, but not by impulse or by imagined self-power, can they be reproduced; my inward self is dry and blasted by many a lightning storm of passion, so that all my beliefs in the goodness of myself and others are dead. An influx of the divine spirit, which is the inheritance of the race, can alone drown all that is impure within me, can alone raise my nature to the higher level which childhood and unselfishness made in years gone by.

1874. *Jan. 1.*—Again I stand on the threshold of another year. The succession of disappointments, doubts, forebodings, anxieties, which has filled up the old year will no doubt creep into the new. Looking back on the past twelve months, which seem much longer than the period of twelve months owing to the changes I have undergone, I feel that there is much to be thankful for. My health, though exposed to danger several times, has, on the whole, been very fair. My stock of knowledge has gradually

been increasing. My attempts in verse, though few, have been more than attempts—I may characterise them as poems.

On the other hand, this year has been productive of great disappointment and sorrow. The beginning of the year found me in very pinched circumstances; anxieties, which almost made me despair of giving proper attention to my work, crowded upon me. In March, June, July, and October, several events occurred which, if I had not been possessed of a certain philosophical temperament, would have gone far towards making me seriously unwell. Then I discovered the little reliance that can be placed upon those who have promised and smiled and shaken hands, and have availed themselves of your services; how one can be thrown contemptuously aside when one's strength and skill have been extracted. Last of all, I found that the possession of greater gifts must bring greater responsibilities upon one. That it is useless to know what is good if we do not practise. I confess with shame that I am not a better man,

if I am not actually a worse one, than I was twelve months ago. In spite of what I know to be right, of what I know to be wrong, my feet tend more to the latter than to the former hence I may close the account of the old year, 1873, with the words that served for 1872—"All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

*Jan. 14.*—It affords one of the most convincing proofs of the immortality of man, the fact that though he has the same passions, is formed of the same materials, and has organs common to many inferior creatures, returning to the same dust, he is so far above these creatures as to be able to reach the stars, to pierce the ground, to fathom the ocean, to recall the past, to prepare for and anticipate the future, to communicate his thoughts, to make the wayward and dangerous elements subservient to his will.

It is not so surprising, viewed in this light, that so many men seem to be raised but little above the brutes ; it is matter for wonderment that with all the affinity that man has with the

beasts of the field, he can rise to the dignity of the scholar, the Christian, the merchant.

It is these thoughts that take off some of the gloom with which otherwise we should view our destiny. Everything appears *so* gross in everyday experience. Where is the thoughtful man who does not shudder at the forms that ghost-like flit by in the streets? We have from our earliest childhood had the truth of the grandeur and existence of the spirit put constantly before us. It presents itself before us in books, in schools, in churches, on the road, in the silent hours of night, and we welcome it as Truth should ever be welcomed. It is the well-spring within our hearts which cools our lurid desires, which overflows and waters these flowers of virtue which find precarious home there. But no sooner do we turn our eyes outwards than we perceive the materialism and total sensuality of life. We might in truth be so many vile animals for all the glimpses of encouragement, for anything ethereal in our persons and surroundings. Our homes, if kept ever so clean,

show us constantly the filth that surrounds us. In the towns we have garbage on every side. Men's faces are reeking with dirt. Little children are toddling along, whose faces seem to have been untouched by anything clean for a month. Ragged-haired women gossip at doors or out of windows. Enter the homes of the people. The burly working man has very little to give expression to but a grunt or an oath. Presently he will sit down to a giant's meal, which he will devour with wolfish eagerness, while perhaps the children are looking on half hungry—very often the mother is. I knew a man a year or two ago, who would not think of giving his children meat, but would pay the highest price for a steak for himself. I know a woman who has a dirty little girl of ten years old. A few weeks ago the little girl had a very sore finger, which the teacher seeing, said would in all probability have to be cut off if it were not seen to, and offered to take the child to the doctor and pay for the finger being seen to. The mother kept the girl at home instead

of accepting the offer, and in a few days the finger became so bad that the girl had to go into a hospital, and has had her finger cut off. These two instances may justify the preceding words, which otherwise might appear harsh, and thoughtlessly written.

Such being the cheerless look-out on the every-day world, let us hoard with misers' care the few strong indications of something nobler inherent in man which the unseen world affords us. The value of history consists greatly in this, that we may behold the actions of our forefathers, as also their words, spiritualised ; taken out of the dust and corroding matters which appear to environ us ; and have the same ideal influence upon us as the dried leaf placed for long years in a book has—an influence which it would never exert if seen on the branch or bough in its fragrant and green state.

We always love to read of heroic deeds and words as attesting the vast resources which those had who performed or altered them—resources which drew upon eternity, so capable

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were they of stimulating, even with death imminent, the most exalted actions, patient endurance, sublime expressions.

*Jan. 17.*—In my almost comfortless life, unrelieved by warm sympathy, or made joyous by few gleams of hopeful sunshine, carrying the dead-weight of myself with me whithersoever I go, it is a real privilege, and one that I value exceedingly, to have an insight of a kindred spirit such as I regard—may I write the words without irreverence—Hawthorne to be. Unlike me, alas! he was a Nathaniel, “in whom indeed was no guile;” but I mark in his character the same love of fame, the same sort of indolence which postponed the execution of works of genius, till the fame which rests on so stable a foundation now seemed as if it were never to become his; the same melancholy spirit which saw amid the gleams of sunshine in life the black clouds, the stormy rain, the gloom of the impenetrable forest, the more darksome gloom and anguish of the heart of man; the magician’s knowledge that, out of the streets, out of the sordid houses,

out of the material, too palpable life around us, may be taken, spirits big with earnestness and fate, whose presence in the pages of the novelist shall make them exhale delicious odours; shall make them seemingly reflect the splendour of precious stones and antique gold; shall confer on the writer undying renown.

I have been surrounded all my life with figures instinct with life; they seem almost to implore to be allowed to display their nature in some romance, which, when it appears, is to move all hearts and exercise all brains. Those figures, many of them, stand out with bold distinctness against a murky sky shot through with golden threads—days, nay, hours, of delusive bliss. They seem to have the key to my memory, for I cannot be sure of my own society for a minute; in they must all come trooping, some with a menacing air as if they were about to thrust a pen into my hand and compel me to write this strange history; some with reproachful looks as if conscious of not being done justice to; others with meek, downcast eyes and fragile



forms, whose ideal grace makes me despair of ever being able adequately to portray them—all the real parts of shadows seen, and spoken to, years or weeks ago.

*Jan. 27.*—Ben went away. God be with him !  
A couple of hours with Tom.

*Jan. 28.*—One of the saddest things in life is to part with one whom we love, thinking to ourselves at the time that many weary, disheartening days must elapse before we shall see him again. This feeling of sadness is, I think, intensified when we perceive after nearly all belonging to our near kin have taken their journey into the lone world, that the last, the youngest must go too, and be so shattered by life's stormy waves as never again to stand at home with the same light heart, the same unselfish spirit, the same interest in simple things. Ah ! and the one or two who are left behind have the poignancy of that pang ; they have little to do but to picture the absent form in the empty chair, with all the heart-breaking reality that is at the beck and call of the deserted ones at home. I could shed bitter tears to think that my life

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must be passed alone, that my look-out is vague, bleak, almost hopeless. Ben said to me on Monday night that in five years' time he would be entitled to some money, which would enable me to publish my poems. Shall I be alive at the end of five years? or shall I have passed away into the eternity where justice is done?

*Jan. 30.*—The day is nice and sunny. Already one begins to think of pleasant things—of green fields and leafy trees, and long, long days of bliss—although the realisation of these thoughts must be postponed, perhaps indefinitely. The last months of the year are inexpressibly monotonous and gloomy in their influence and suggestion; our spirits seem to reflect the darkness, the mistiness, the cold of November and December. Even Christmas to my mind is not joyous. It suggests more the cheerfulness created by the ruddy fire than that springing from Nature. Man is at his best under open skies, when the sun is tinting every flower and leaf with glory, or after the pitying shower which drowns the dust and vivifies every animate thing.

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Buried in libraries, and with one hand always fettered to our Note-book, we lose the health which springs from the exercise, not only of the mind but of the body.

*Feb. 8.*—How melancholy the bells seem to make one! Relics of the Middle Ages, they are out of place in these days, and serve only to recall the memory of times that never can be recalled. Yet on second thought I do not know but that in these material days they may have a great influence on unpoetical minds, an influence certainly not harmful. The din of hammer, the infernal noise of bellows and furnaces, the clacking of tongues, the clatter of waggons and carts, are sounds that appear to possess little tendency to raise our minds to serious thought and arouse our hearts to earnest feeling. But the sound of the bells has in it nothing practical. To a well-informed mind it brings the remembrance of vanished ages, their monasteries, their chivalry, their crimson passions toned down, and very often aroused by the Church. To an uneducated mind it brings a vague feeling

of unrest, a conviction that the bells are voices from an unseen world—voices of prophets calling on all men to repent.

“First plan of a Tragedy.” *Dramatis personæ* :  
—The Count of Walsengen, brave, honourable. The Scholar, living in Castle of Count W., and respected by all ; fond of antiquities and poetry ; a Platonist and bibliomaniac. Armand, the Count’s nephew, brave and ardent. Jacques, landlord of the “Three-legged Chamois,” formerly a convict ; selfish and criminal, but a coward. Gurugal, a drunken rogue, detector of the secrets of Jacques and Jean. Jean, a convict ; then steward to Count W. ; then aspirant for the love of the Countess ; then her murderer. Arnold, an honest servant at the Castle. Claude, ditto. Malderis, a ruffian, in league with Jacques and Jean. Countess of Walsengen, good and beautiful ; victim of conspirators. Gertrude, sister of Countess, beloved by Armand, secretly beloved by Scholar. Rachel, sister to Jean, then the false Countess. Annette, maid to Countess. Margot, an old woman, servant to

Jacques ; afterwards a minister of vengeance. Soldiers, &c. &c.

Here follows the skeleton of the tragedy, distinctly planned, and divided into acts and scenes, but so voluminous and complicated that I despair of any reader's taking in the story. I did not ; though this was one of the MSS. sent to me to read—so far as it was complete. I remember advising its non-completion ; urging that the author should reserve his strength for a simpler and much less unpleasant subject. This one was all murder, conspiracy, deceit, and villainy—a claptrap following of the old dramatists, except in their impurity. It had power in it, but power of the rough scene-painting kind. Not true, high art, simple as strong. I counselled the suppression of the tragedy, and probably my advice was followed ; for I do not find it among these MSS. Now that I see how

hard such a verdict must have fallen, I grieve over it ; yet, so far as memory serves me, I see no reason to retract my judgment.

The morning is nice and sunny. Walk in evening with T. T. Just looked into a Tabernacle at Stepney, presided over by one A. B.; but hearing nothing having life or truthful Truth in it, soon came out. We shall wake up suddenly in another world, and shall look upon these unsatisfying things as dreams—dreams. We shall wonder at the vexation and gloom that clouded our earthly life ; shall be surprised at the trifles that troubled and pleased us. God help us—for we need help !

Here, as a curious instance of the versatility of Martin's mind—the variety of his tastes and instincts—occurs a space of three pages, entirely occupied with accurate data, which must have cost much research, on the subject of diamonds. He then abruptly proceeds to comments and notes on the

Elizabethan dramatists, giving their various dates with scrupulous accuracy. A methodical and most wonderful memory must have been possessed by this poor young schoolmaster.

*March 4.*—Looking to-night over some letters of three or four years ago brought rather melancholy thoughts. It seems strange that, having once been intimate with people, in a manner revered them, we should be dissevered entirely from them. That not only in body, but in spirit, in feeling, we should be more than strangers. It is hard that we cannot go on building up friendships—that no sooner do we gain one dear one than we lose another—not by death, but, alas! by coldness of heart, sometimes losing those whom we had got to love, without finding others to occupy their places. I suppose this is part of the hard discipline of life.

*March 6.*—I would willingly exchange this work of a teacher for one less harassing to the temper. To gain and preserve authority over scores of

children, one needs—as far as my experience prompts me to speak—an arrogant spirit, an immovable will, an absence of the sense of the ludicrous at all times, and a mind elevated but little above the children themselves. There is very little, if any, of that ideal charm gracefully investing the schoolroom which has been spoken of in works of fiction. In the present day everything connected with school-work is painfully matter-of-fact—the teaching itself downright drudgery. With a price fixed, as it were, upon each scholar, he is regarded in many cases, not as a young member of the human world to be treated with sympathy and love, but as an obstinate animal that wont work, and must be made at all hazards to work; as an unprofitable piece of ground filled with thistles and intrinsically of poor quality, but which must be made hurriedly to grow for the examination harvest a few thin ears of the wheat of knowledge.

*March 7.*—On river with Tom. Afternoon walk up to see George, with Tom.

*March 8.*—To see Père (his father). On re-



turning home in the evening, at 8.30, was agreeably surprised to find, after a few minutes had elapsed, and just as I was sitting down to the "Divine Comedy," Ben knocking at the door. He came up from Rochester on Saturday. He stayed with me all night ; and after a fair breakfast this (Monday) morning, we parted. He goes to Rochester to-day. God be with him ! An organ-grinder is giving some music, which, however properly executed, serves only to bring up the words of Jean Paul Richter in all their melancholy truth and hopelessness of expression—"Away, away ! Thou speakest to me of things which in all my endless life I have found not, and shall not find."

Saw yesterday the man referred to in my Notebook as "Micawber"—the first time since the event described there, more than eighteen months ago. He was just as confident as ever ; talked about his fight against fate, and of his plans, although his condition is just the same as then. The poor beggar is too fond of his dram ever to maintain any position, which his intelligence,

tact, and self-possession might enable him to get.

*March 10.*—Ben, to my great surprise, turned up again, from Rochester ; stayed all night.

*March 11.*—Ben with me all day.

*March 12.*—Ben with me in evening, and all night.—9.30 P.M. Letter from R. H.—who is out of his position.

This “R. H.” and “T. T.”—so often referred to—seem to be the only companions, in his own rank of life, that Martin ever made. Both are still living. The one, Robert Hustler, is a private soldier, now stationed in Ireland; “T. T.,” Thomas Turner, is or was employed in some position on Limehouse Pier. I have no other data concerning them, nor is it necessary. Martin’s long and faithful friendship for them—the three were schoolfellows together—implies that they were deserving of it.

*March 13.*—It would not be an interesting thing just now, when subject to difficulty and anxiety in my material position and in my hopes, to jot down the cases of poets who have had no ordinary misfortune and privation in their lives.

I very often find comfort in reading of the wonders they performed under the most heart-breaking difficulties. I know, too, that the majority of our great poets have had great sorrow. Now, let me briefly note the sorrowful events in the life of each, from which issued, or at any rate which helped to produce, the undying works of genius.

He here makes a sort of catalogue raisonnée of all the misfortunes of authors, from Chatterton downwards: which I omit. It is curious, however, as indicating his wide range of reading, and his tenacious, methodical memory of what he read.

*March 20.*—This afternoon a strange event

varied the monotony of school life. Our school-house is situated about a couple of hundred yards from the Thames. At about three o'clock we were proceeding quietly with our lessons, when a man informed us that the river was overflowing its banks. We had barely time to get the boys out (without a preliminary word) before the waters flowed in at the back door, wetting the feet of the last boys. In ten minutes the water was in the schoolroom to the height of three and a half feet. The wall of the playground nearest the river was broken, and five or six feet of water would have been in the schoolroom, if another wall had not given way, and thus drained off some of the water into the streets. A great deal of damage was done to the houses; the kitchens in the row of houses opposite this were all flooded to the extent of five or six feet. I gather from those who have lived about here for years, that this inundation exceeds any that they are acquainted with. I have no doubt that all along the river much damage has been done, and perhaps life lost. The papers will enable us to

form an idea as to the extent and mischief of the overflow. Sat up all night, expecting that there would be a higher tide, but all passed off well. No tide so high for more than fifty years.

*March 21.*—A hard morning's work to get the schoolroom prepared. Up to Bevan's in evening, and saw Ben, who came in a few minutes after me. He walked with me to W. I. Dock Station, and we parted, I suppose for some time. Writing this at 11.30. Night. I feel tired and unwell.

*March 22.*—Rest all day.

*March 23.*—No school. In afternoon to Tom, and accompanied him to Bevan's on business.

*March 24.*—Recommenced work. A very bad cold.

From March to September there are very few entries in the Note-book, either of the rare and brief personal facts which hide so much sad domestic history, or of the long disquisitions, ethical, political, or literary, on which his mind was exercised continually,

to the desired oblivion of his painful surroundings. He seems at this time to have studied Dante intently and thoroughly—of course in a translation. But that he contemplated mastering other languages besides his own, is clear, from a long list, occupying several pages, of Latin and Portuguese vocabulary, probably copied out of some dictionaries which he could not afford to buy. The determined pursuit of knowledge was as strong in him as the love of poetry.

Very few holidays he seems to have had, but at Whitsuntide. May, this year, 1874, he mentions going to Great Easton, and also to Snarebrook in Essex, to Woolwich to see a Review by the Emperor of Russia, &c. &c. And on the 29th June there is, without any other explanation, the short line—"Entered upon work at Great Easton, Dunmow, Essex"—destined to be the last work, last change, of his changeful life. On July 9 he writes thus :—

For the past two or three months my mind has had cessation from much mental labour, only to find its strength frittered away in scenes of idleness. Now may I hope to interweave flowers of fancy and fruits of thought with the quiet plant of grateful rest. To God, who has thus far been infinitely merciful to me, undeserving as I am, may I be thankful !

This is a quiet village of about twenty houses. Opposite me is the old church with its peaceful graveyard. Out of the window I can see the small village green with the pump, the only source whence water can be obtained. Round this pump the children accumulate every now and then to dabble in the water, or occasionally to lift the handle up and down. We are at the top of a hill, descending which is to be found a small stream, crossed by a rude bridge. The people are of the usual type to be seen, I believe, in the country parts of England, not over intelligent, and lacking in courtesy, not so much out of a disagreeable nature as from ignorance what manners mean. Here my home is to be for some time, perhaps for months, perhaps for

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years. Who can say? The thing that the weary heart ever seeks to find—friends of the heart—I seem never to find, and life glides away!

*July 12.*—Yesterday, 11th, letters to Mater (his mother) and Ellen. A walk to the antique village of Great Bardsfield.

*July 15.*—Letter from Mater.

*July 16.*—Letter from Ellen, enclosing one from Ben, dated 12th June, from Rio Janeiro. In this he says that no letter from me has reached him, though I wrote on 28th April; which letter, allowing the same time for its journey as that of Ben's—viz., about thirty-four days—should have reached Rio on or about June 3rd or 4th. Letter to Ellen, re-enclosing Ben's letter.

*July 18.*—A walk to Broxted and neighbourhood; a very hot day. The grassy, tree-shaded lanes delicious from about ten till three.

*July 25.*—A walk to Henham-on-the-Hill and Elsenham. The day has been very warm; but the country, owing to a slight storm yesterday, looks very nice, and I have no doubt smells very



nice. I cannot express a certainty on the latter point on account of the defective state of my nose. All the way the corn, yellow and red, sways with the breezes; butterflies innumerable and gaily-coloured moths flit happily along. Bees are as busy as ever, and suggest by their humming the same drowsy, happy feeling that wild thyme ever does suggest to me. All is quiet and calm, brooded over by that mysterious effect called Nature, of the eternal cause—God. Yet the pulsating human heart feels disquieted. The void wants filling; ever it is longing to draw within its vacancy objects of love and affectionate interest; ever it confesses that “all is vanity and vexation of spirit beneath the sun.”

*July 31.*—A fine day. I cannot complain now of being mewed up in the great city, for even as I write I have on my desk some flowers which the boys have brought me; while looking through the windows I can see trees on every hand, and grass in the road which runs past. Opposite is a wooden contrivance, a sort of barred prison for keeping a hen from running about;

her young ones can get in and out, but she is unable to accompany them on their little tours.

*Aug. 6.*—The harvest is now being gathered in. On every side one can see the ripened grain fall. No shelter for the poppies now; they must be cut down and share the fate of all things that exist only for themselves. The harvest of our lives, will it be full and fine, or poor and coarse? Oh! it is a question that I should bear in mind must be asked some day: "The harvest of thy life is about being gathered in; art thou ready for the reaper's hand?"

All the work of the year has this in view to crown it and repay it—all efforts are to this end—the ingathering of the heavy, sunburnt sheaf. For this golden sunshine, silvery moonshine; windy, dry, and rainy days; for this the plough, the harrow, the sowing, the weeding, the watching, the anxiety, the barns, the ingathering of the magnificent corn.

The lessons this wondrous time give us are too obvious to be mistaken, too serious to be slighted.

'Tis useless to sermonise, but let us lay them quietly to heart, and try to profit by them.

*Aug. 8.*—Walk to and from Dunmow. This morning, after getting up, found in the wash-house a poor frightened robin. His little heart I could see was panting with the exertions he had made to find an outlet. Directly I opened the window, out he flew like lightning.

*Aug. 10.*—Holidays commence. To-day a revived imitation of the ancient ceremony of presenting a fitch of bacon to those married couples who have lived in peace for twelve months, is "in" (to use a common word at present at Dunmow). It will be nothing but a saturnalia, I suppose.

The clouds hang ominously above, or flit across the cool, grey sky. We have just had a smart shower, but I suppose before very long there will be a storm, as for the past week the weather has been very uncertain.

*Sept. 13.*—To-day, while at church, a cat got into the pantry and stole part of my dinner—the best part—namely, some good mutton, off which

I intended dining comfortably. No trace of the thief was to be discovered, and I found in a clearer way than had ever before presented itself to me the truth of the old adage—"Many a slip between the cup and the lip;" for I had to go without my dinner.

*Sept.* 21.—Executed a rough will in the event of my decease; for God may call me unprepared, both as regards temporal and spiritual affairs, to His judgment throne.

*Oct.* 2.—How one is pestered and annoyed in his work! The elementary teacher, not so much from parents perhaps, as the teacher whose work is educationally higher, but still too much. Some people seem to think that the teacher possesses no authority over children entrusted to his care, that all he has to do is to obey the dictates of parents, is to adopt the plan *they* think most fit in educating their children.

Now that the long winter evenings are coming, or rather when they come, I shall be able to comfortably settle down to work. It is good that the tired brain should have its period of

rest, and that period it has when the evenings are long and warm and the grate cold and gloomy. I am very fond of the fireside, that grand institution of the northern nations, source of more inspiration than the sun.

*Oct. 5.*—Rough materials for essay on “Rise and Fall of Nations, States, and Empires.”

Here follow many pages in which the amount of research, and the succinct classification of the matter found, is really wonderful. The material thus gathered, (how, who knows ?) and carefully arranged and digested for the Essay never to be written, is a touching memorial of the indomitable energy of the man.

*Oct. 11.*—Tea and evening with old-fashioned country people, who placed glasses of ale on the table with tea.

*Oct. 12.*—I think when this Note-book is finished, I will not carry it on any longer in this shape ; to speak more intelligible English,

I will not keep a diary for the future. This really was intended at first for a Note-book, to consist mainly of thoughts, readings, with the more important events that varied life's monotony, but I regard this book as being to all intents and purposes a diary; it has degenerated into such. As one is apt to give undue importance to one's own trials, griefs, and sorrowful thoughts, it happens too often that a diary does not reflect truth, but only the shallow mind of the writer. I did not start with the intention of keeping a diary, so will for the future adhere more closely to my original idea, which was that of a book of miscellaneous information, culled from different sources, with occasionally my own thoughts upon them.

*Oct. 17.*—What a contrast between this quiet, silent life, and the bustling life of London! When the schoolboys depart, at half-past four or five, I have perfect quiet and leisure. I live in the school-house all alone. I yearn very often for one of the "gentler sex"—wish that I had the comforts, even with the cares, of matrimonial

life ; but a scanty salary, not to speak of the absence of the fitting person, renders these thoughts of no avail. It is, however, to me, who have always been in the thick of the battle of life, a relief, a melancholy one, but still a relief, to be in this remote village. At six o'clock now, when people in London are beginning to think of pleasure and business, I think of bed. I am generally in my bedroom by half-past seven. Indeed, at six o'clock it is as silent, though I am on the edge of a village, as if it were twelve at midnight. I am up rather late to-night—8.15—and, looking out a few minutes ago, found everything pitchy dark and silent, a few lights in windows gleaming here and there. One good thing, this solitude will afford me means and opportunity for studying. Life has hitherto been a battle with me ; it is time I had a little repose.

*Oct. 29.*—Called up to London, but too late to see in life poor mother, who, through a shocking accident, died on Wednesday, 25th, in London Hospital. I hope her spirit is at rest !

*Oct. 31.*—Inquest.

*Nov. 1.*—A visit from Tom, and accompanied by him, George, and Ben, went to see Mrs. H.

*Nov. 2.*—Funeral, in Plaistow Cemetery, of poor mother.

*Nov. 3.*—Return to Easton.

On this brief record of the ending of a long tragedy I make no comments. The writer made none. Let all pass. The silence of his lifetime shall not be broken now he is dead.

*Nov. 4.*—Letters to Ellen, Mr. Linklater, and Mrs. Craik.

Copy of Mrs. Craik's letter :—

“The Corner House, Shortlands, Kent,  
Nov. 2, 1874.

“DEAR MR. MARTIN,—

“I was glad to hear from you ; glad to see that for all practical purposes you have well carried out the promise that seemed to be in you. As for the poetry, time will show.

“We happened to have staying with us a gentleman, admirable as a critic, and holding



a very high position in the press. I gave him your letter and poems. He was deeply interested in the former; of the latter he thought less, much less indeed than I do. But he, a man who has 'made himself' from a not very much higher start than you, has good hope of your future as something—whether a poet or not remains to be proved. You are *not* a poet yet, though there is poetical feeling, and sometimes poetical expressions, in your verses. But it would be insanity to publish them yet. You would stamp yourself at once as very inferior to what I believe you are capable of, and thereby hinder your career exceedingly. Publish nothing till you can give something which will make your mark at once. That is my earnest advice, combined with that of this gentleman, who, if I could name him, which I shall not do, would be seen to be the best critic you could have had. Nor, being a kindly man, will he have forgotten you, when you do something worthy of being remembered. I return your MS. with pencil remarks. Send me, from time to time, what

you do; continue your education in every possible way. I don't say 'write no poetry,' for you can't help it; but let poetry be the work of otherwise idle hours. Education is the first thing necessary. As my friend said, reading your list of certificates, '*That* is the proof—there *must* be something in the young fellow, or he could not have won all these;' and he, having educated himself in much the same way, appreciated your difficulties.

"Now, do not build too much on what I say. Nobody can help you so well as yourself, nor until you *have* helped yourself; but sympathy is a great help, and I will not forget you. Would you like an *Athenæum* newspaper every week? I will send it you. The first one comes with this letter and your MS. What French books have you to study from? I might find you one or two if I knew what you wanted.

"Very truly yours,

"D. M. CRAIK."

On this letter—which after much con-

sideration, I have thought it best to give entire, just as I find it copied in the Notebook—he makes no comment whatever. Its double decision—and the second critic's judgment was even harder than I ventured to put it—must have been found by the young author very hard to bear. The next entry, though vague and impersonal, indicates how strongly it had affected him.

*Nov. 7.*—It is strange, the alternations of hope and despair to which the human mind is subject. One day things appear in their bleakest, blackest outline. We look round us, and can perceive nothing calculated to cheer our depressed spirits; the only gloomy, prominent object we can see is the grave. Our former joys and hopes serve but to intensify the intolerable woe of the present. It is very wonderful how we manage to emerge out of this dismal state into an atmosphere of joy and hope; although so soon are we re-led into the opposite extreme, we do

not get much good out of it. It is wrong, wrong, wicked, and brain-enfeebling to look upon the dark side of life; there is balm in Gilead for every wound. Not to speak of the consolations of religion, we have hope and joyful life in everything natural around us. What though the winter strips the trees and seems to kill the flowers, all things arouse with the spring. The Resurrection is continually being preached. I grow ashamed of myself to think that half my care springs not from high causes, from fear of the deprivation of my intellect, heart, or soul; but from anxious forebodings about the quantity or quality of the food I am likely to get in the future.

The great fault of the present age, if it can be called a fault, is analysis. Even while I write I am searching for the cause which prompts these words of hope, and I find it in two or three simple, half material things, which I forbear to mention. In spite of these facts, dwelt upon by materialistic philosophers, of the inherent selfishness of man, that half his

good thoughts and deeds are productions of motives sometimes too base to mention, I *must* take an optimist view of man's origin and destiny, whatever opinion I may happen to hold concerning his ordinary position. Only for this hope of the immortality of the spirit I should be wretched. It is as true for me as for St. Paul. I was asked seriously a few days ago whether I really thought that man was immortal. I tremble for this age of selfishness and doubt. If we have no future life, let the earth fall from its place and confusion seize mankind, for life is useless. But calmly, gladly, confidently, we can go on. Reason, faith, hope, the unutterable yearnings of humanity, are too mighty to give way to those who have no higher desires than cats or dogs.

Nov. 12.—The winter is setting in. This morning the ground was covered with frost, and to-night I can hear the wind howling round the house, and through the bare-leaved trees. I think of that poor form in its cold, cold, gloomy grave, so full of life not three weeks ago. Yet

on calm thought it can feel no cold, can hear no wind, cannot consider itself lonely, for it is only the ruined house out of which the immortal spirit was untimely ejected. God in His great mercy grant that I may learn to number my days, and to try by His help to oust from my heart those fierce devils of evil desires which have dwelt so long there. . Oh! Lord have mercy! If Thou wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, I may not abide Thee.

*Nov. 27.*—The eve of another birthday. In the year that has been added to my life, 180 pages of this book have been sorrowfully scrawled upon; when I turn them over I recall, without any effort of memory, the cares, forebodings, anxieties, which filled them. God be thanked for sparing me thus far when so many have been stricken down by stray death.

*Dec. 4.*—Re-reading, for the first time since 1860, the magical story of "Robinson Crusoe;" also a day or two ago re-read "Uncle Tom's Cabin" for the third time—first time, about 1863 or 1864; second time, 1868; third time,

1874. I think I'll jot down just for curiosity, when I have leisure, a rough list of books that I have wholly or partly read, or that I have gained any information from at all. I recollect, ten years ago, I showed a pretty fair list; it used to be quite a pleasure to make out a list of books that I had devoured. I wonder how many I could summon up in my memory if I tried now.

*Dec. 5.*—Walk to and from Dunmow.

List of Books read between 1859 and 1874.

This is enormous. It comprises the works of Scott, Dickens, Fielding, Smollett, Defoe, Goldsmith; foreign novelists of repute—Dumas, Balzac, Sue, George Sand, Victor Hugo, Erckmann-Chatrian; nearly all classical and much modern poetry; whilst in history, biography, criticism, and miscellaneous literature, the number of books is very great. Obviously, Martin's power of retain-

ing and digesting all he read must have been as remarkable as his gigantic appetite for books. When one looks up at yards upon yards of close-packed, dust-covered library shelves, and thinks of this poor starved soul, poking amidst the very garbage of literature for a little food, wholesome food, and finding it somehow—Heaven knows how!—one is inclined to feel more than sorry—ashamed.

*Monday, Dec. 7.*—"Education is the first thing necessary," says my good friend, Mrs. Craik; but in the solitude to which I have devoted myself, and to which I perforce must continue to devote myself, there is ample opportunity afforded me of inquiring into the truth or proportion of truth contained in various axioms, which men in more busy scenes, with less time for reflection, might unhesitatingly accept. Education is simply allowing the faculties of the mind to have full scope, to be fully exercised upon the different aspects which Nature con-



tinually presents to us, in the persons of men, women, children, brutes ; in flowers, plants, trees, and all her sensible phenomena. These, when viewed by the microscopic eye of the mind, are capable of showing us the wonderful and beautiful dress which Nature puts on—shows us the complexity and utility of inferior objects, the comparative superiority of ourselves. Up to this stage and at this stage there is no balm in Gilead. We perceive, it is true, our superiority to many of the things around us, but to our chagrin the nearest things teach us lessons of wisdom, beauty, industry, economy, which we are far from having the requisite power to profit by. We stand alone in Nature (to all appearance), and proudly at times exult in the possession which we deny to the inferior creatures, and of a hope in the far future. But we have not gauged the mind of dog, cat, elephant, or bee ; words and motions may to these seem to be dictated by instinct, and many grave councils may be held by them, relating to the arrogance or vagaries of the human race—if speech and gait, a dash

more of what we call "instinct," enabled some canine or feline reporter to give us the particulars.

All attainments, all insight into Nature, the utmost powers of the mind fully educes, fall like withered leaves from the dreary tree of our life, before the keen searching blast which withers ever from the grave—deep, deep. Once to look on the body of a dead person ought to be a death-blow to all pride, all selfishness, all sense of knowing. Hence the most certain thing we are likely to know is that the grave is yawning for us, and that our hearts one day—and how soon we cannot tell—must be cold and quiet; that our brains, so busy, so subtle, with their speculations and hopes, making an eternity out of time, must crumble into a pinch of wormy dust; that our grasping, idle, or pinching hands must be numb; that whether blown about on the viewless winds, or lying with fishes in the deep, or mouldering in the grassy churchyard, earth and time have ceased to be for us; that not the less our delight in existence, as well as

the harassing cares of life, are over, and that beyond——

Thank God, we have a hope—we have a hope. We are not created to no end—that is out of the question. It has been said, if there is no immortality man has been very shabbily treated, inasmuch as the belief in it has been inherent in the most savage races. We put aside that question, as admitting no doubt or dispute, but with all, the knowledge that we must one day lay aside these fleshly weeds, is enough to erase from the mind any desire to excel in knowledge or wisdom, seeing that much study is weariness to the flesh; that increased light brings increased responsibilities; that life is too short nowadays to get any but superficial knowledge; and that finally, in the words of the disappointed king, the writer of a fine, sad, one might almost say sixteenth-century book, so tinged is it with bitter disappointment, the conclusion of the matter can never be anything but this—Fear God and keep His commandments: for that is the whole duty of man.

After this comes a long interlinear French translation, marked "Words underlined either not known, or not clearly understood in their relation to the context. To be examined soon." Afterwards, "Sketch for a Christmas tale—hereafter"—the "hereafter" that never came!

*Dec. 19.*—The aspect of the country is very wintry. Several falls of snow have taken place within the past week; and this village being situated on a hill, the winds are continually howling round about us. At night they sigh drearily around my house, and I often wonder, so strong are they sometimes, that the chimneys do not come toppling down. I linger with regretful affection over this book. I know it cannot last much longer; its time must soon arrive. For two and a quarter years most of my hopes and fears have found expression in its pages, so that I may regard it as almost a living thing. In my quiet, uneventful life it is strange to witness what thoughts, hopes, fears, that seize


on eternity have obtruded themselves. I may say that the duration of time which this Note-book represents has been, in anguish, anxiety, and care, a lifetime. Yet all these medicinal things strengthen the intellect, soften the heart, have a tendency to make us throw our sorrows, together with our sins, before the merciful eyes and beautiful feet of Jesus Christ. It is not to be doubted that even in these scornful days the Lord comes very often with noiseless approach into dead hearts, as into the house of Jairus, and with the same intent. If He will but enter into mine, I shall rise up from the sleep of sin which has given me all my life nothing but horrible dreams.—*Miserere Domine.*

After this comes a page of criticism on “self-taught poets,” and then, with an abrupt “farewell,” the volume finishes.

The second Note-book, and last, begins Jan. 10, 1875, and consists of “thoughts, material for essays, and critical remarks.” It is marked with the mournful text,

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.”

The first pages are occupied by some “Stray Remarks on Republicanism,” followed by a long essay on Dante’s “Inferno,” which seems to have taken the strongest hold on his imagination. He calls it “the greatest poem yet produced by the human race.” He has evidently studied it as deeply as any work, only read in translation, could be studied, and has informed himself fully as to the history, the manners, the political and social aspect of the time. He, this Wapping schoolmaster, with all his sad surroundings, and Dante in his Florence—what a contrast! How entirely Martin must have thrown himself out of himself, to be able to enter into that far-



back mediæval life, which few understand, and fewer really enjoy !

The next entry consists of a copy of a letter to myself, which I here insert, just to indicate the sort of letters he wrote, how formal, and how entirely impersonal, almost completely veiling the real character and life of the man.

“ Great Easton, Jan. 31, 1875.

“ DEAR MADAM,—I am at a loss to express sufficiently my sense of your very great kindness.\* Beyond saying that I am sincerely thankful, I shall trouble you with only a few words. Frozen waters may be carried in one’s fingers. Our emotions, when allowed to freeze, may be expressed by cold dead words, of which there are plenty to be found in the dictionary ; but the warm feelings of the heart have no words fitly to represent them ; no language will

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\* I have entirely forgotten what this was, and it is needless to attempt to remember it.

suffice to convey them in all their strength and sincerity; but of the fulness of the heart the mouth in this sense does not always speak. I thank you for your spontaneous kindness and sympathy, due to no merits of my own, but coming from a generous heart that does not look closely into the deserts of those upon whom it confers favours—ay, blessings; for sympathy is a blessing, in this respect genial and impartial as the sun. Ah me! life is gliding away; hopeful dreams unrealised; two facts enough to take the edge off all joy. I feel I am fast growing to be a pigmy in a land of intellectual giants. Yet though this is a wonderful age, a poet is wanted. What, is Tennyson dead? Browning, Swinburne, Morris—do they still exist? They do; yet in my estimation there is a lull just now, announcing the advent of a poet that shall wear no laurel, but shall with loftiness and purity of thought speak and appeal to this materialistic age. If I run contrary to your opinions, dear Madam, pray forgive me, but my ideal of what a poet should be left these ‘weeds



of miserable flesh' twenty-five years ago, in the person of Wordsworth, descendant of the noble Milton, descendant himself in several poetical particulars of the wonderful Dante. I've no sympathy with these 'idle singers of an empty day.' But, happily for you, dear Madam, I must end.

"Sincerely yours,

"JOHN MARTIN."

As most readers will see, this letter, the only one he has copied in the Note-book, but a fair sample of all, has a certain *posé* attitude, an affectation of literary effect, which gives a false and even painful impression of the man. I remember feeling this at the time, and doubting whether the young fellow (I did not know his age, and believed him to be younger than he was), who so evidently thought himself a poet, would ever succeed in being one. Had he sent me instead of verses one of his critical

essays, or a paper entitled "Our School," which is the next I find in the Note-book, my opinion might have been modified, and my interest in him and his work would certainly have been much greater. Besides, I might have suggested a market for his wares—since most magazine editors would have appreciated such a paper as the following, which I print as I have done the journal, absolutely without correction of word or line.

#### OUR SCHOOL.

I think our school-days are the happiest of our life. To be sure we have difficulties in them which seem insurmountable, and sorrows which appear very bitter ; but, spite of all, no time in after years gives our memory such unalloyed pleasure. The real test of the joy we had in them is the grief we feel at their loss, at the thought that they are beyond our reach for ever—that all their lovely flowers of expectation have

withered in manhood's selfish and anxious atmosphere, or have been long since trodden ruthlessly underfoot in the onward rush of life. In those days lay our young lives full to the brim with hope. The future, darkened perhaps for a moment now and then, gleamed nearly always resplendently upon our advancing lives. We knew little or nothing of the great problems of life; sin was shrouded as much as possible from our view. Keen ingratitude had not icily chilled us to the bone; death seemed ever so far off; despair was not even known by name. We knew nothing of the horizon; it seemed that if we could only obtain a blessed holiday—truly a holy-day to us—we could reach the end of the world and gaze with astonished and delighted eyes upon the splendours of a fathomless abyss. What tours we had to places that seemed vast as counties, which we discovered afterwards to be merely fields. The chase of a butterfly was rapture; to dabble in some cool, placid pond, ecstasy. To read with a chosen companion some absorbing tale, which assisted rather than

dispelled the illusions in which our spirits were wrapt, the height and the amaranthine crown of, I will not say boyish, but human, bliss.

I feel sad when I think of my schoolboy days. It is fifteen years since I was in the midst of school-days, but that time seems to be farther back. When I summon up the memory of the griefs, anxieties, hopes, despairs, and doubts which have formed my experience of life since I left school, remote antiquity seems the fitting phrase to express the wide gulf which yawns between the boy of 1859 and the man of 1875. The sadness is due to several causes, one of which every thinking man must derive gloom from—namely, the comparative, at any rate, innocence, freedom from anxiety, and delight in simple things which are the characteristics of the boy.

I never think of the dingy street in which our school was situated without perceiving, with the microscopic eye of the mind, the most radiant sunshine. Sunbeams ever stretch from kennel to kennel. I cannot conceive that street as being,

for a single moment, devoid of golden light. Down it walked good Mr. R., reading his newspaper or else twirling his great stick, attended very often by the more studious of the boys, who delighted to meet him at the top of the street, for the purpose of escorting him to the school-door.

Along that thoroughfare two or three of us would very often hasten on our way to a boundless expanse of rolling prairie—in plain words, to Bow Common—consisting then of about four hundred acres of grass land, but now almost entirely covered over with houses. Every square foot of that street contains “haunted ground.” Its long expanse, drear enough to the stranger, or to the native who views it not in the light of the imagination, although suggestive of all that is darksome and awful in human life, brings vividly to my remembrance the strange delights, the eager pleasures, the hopeful ambition of my school-days, and balances all that evil which subsequently made the place hateful to me, while I was living near it.

Our schoolroom was not very large, but then

the number of scholars was not great, never reaching, so far as my memory serves me, to more than seventy on any one occasion. These scholars I may attempt to classify roughly, according to their status in the little kingdom of the school, not to any perceptible difference in the station of their parents—as aristocrats, plebeians, and proletarians. The first named consisted of eight or ten boys at the head of the school; the second, embracing about a dozen boys belonging to the lower part of the first class and the upper part of the second; the third, of course, comprising the bulk of the pupils. Strange to say, the boundaries of these three classes were sharply defined.

Boys have been well called “little men,” for they resemble men not only in physical conformation, but in character and disposition.

The boys at the head of the school were extremely arrogant. Between them and the “prolets” of the third and fourth classes not the slightest familiarity existed, while mutual dislike made a gulf between me and the “plebs,” which

was only bridged over temporarily in the event of a great fight, when indeed the three divisions coalesced, and seemingly became friends; but who does not know that a fight levels all distinction? Each party, however, generally pursued its own course, enjoyed itself after its own fashion, and, as far as the two first were concerned, harassed its rival on every possible occasion. If the haughty leader of the higher party had a sneer at every scheme which the "plebs" put forward, they were not slow to express their contempt for him and his companions, and to exult in any mortification which he or they experienced. If the upper boys were older by a year or two, besides having among them two or three undaunted pugilists, the more genial manner of the "plebs" had conciliated one or two famous heroes outside the walls of the schoolroom, who, besides being bound by strong ties of friendship, were chronic and fierce foes of the "aristocs."

I remember there was one of these outsiders whose fame amongst us (the "plebs") was almost

mythological in the faith which it demanded of us. His exploits, by all accounts (I myself had never witnessed any of them), had been wonderful, and threatened to overshadow those of the most redoubtable in our school. It was a firmly-rooted belief in our minds that he could thrash any boy in the neighbourhood. His very name had a spice of uncertainty about it, which was only in accordance with the mysterious nature of his claims. The name prefixed to his surname was singular, and its origin was doubtful. Indeed, I never knew what *was* his real Christian name. He was called by us, and never demurred to, the name of "Tinny"—his surname being Gillett.

Although then the thought that "Tinny" Gillett was ready at a moment's notice to espouse our cause, inspired us with a jaunty consciousness of strength, which provoked and disconcerted our enemies, for they knew as well as we the high estimation in which he was held; like ourselves, they gave him unbounded credit for superior strength and for skill in the use of his fists.



Our confidence in the skill and endurance of this auxiliary rested upon an insecure foundation. "Tinny" Gillett, one luckless day, came to loggerheads with Joe Adams, one of the most daring spirits in the ranks of our rivals. Joe was quick-tempered in the extreme, and daring enough, when caned, to take up slates and attempt to throw them at Mr. R.'s head, though he invariably got such a severe and extra flogging for his threats as would have crushed the spirit out of any other boy in the school. Mr. R. being a man of great height and strength, who, though in general almost too easy and good-tempered, displayed, when fairly aroused, the most formidable determination to assert his authority.

The two heroes of the rival camps could find no way out of the little misunderstanding which had arisen between them than by a fight, and accordingly a "mill," to use a word then much in vogue, was arranged to "come off" on the following day in the dinner-hour. The bearing of the "aristocs" in the interval was calm, yet with a certain tinge of anxiety perceptible to us

all; while our demeanour was rendered still bolder by a joyful confidence in the excellence of our champion, who, we made sure, would so soon inflict a crushing blow upon our foes, and deprive them of that supremacy which they were in the habit of asserting over us and the "prolets."

The day, "big with the fate" of prolets and of plebs, arrived. The arena, one of our favourite haunts, was chosen. It was a lane situated in the centre of a dense mass of streets, yet was "far from the maddening crowd," for the reason that there were no dwelling-houses in it, only the rear walls of two or three great manufacturing factories. Better still, it was in a great measure remote from the daily walks of the policeman, so that we had no fear of being disturbed by an apparition in blue.

Ten minutes after dismissal, the partisans of the two combatants mustered numerously at the scene of impending battle. Aristocrats acted as second to Joe, while "Tinny" had that charitable assistance rendered him by one of our number,

who, although considerably older than most of the "plebs," never rose above the second class : all his zeal and devotion being given to various adventurous sports, which made him quite an oracle, even with the most tolerant of the "aristocs," as far as matters connected with play were concerned.

"Tinny" Gillett led off in splendid style, stripped to the waist of all but his shirt. He was followed into the chalk ring by Joe Adams, whose appearance, so we thought, contrasted unfavourably with that of his opponent. He was not so tall, nor so stout, and his face was rather pale ; but then he had what compensates for physical defects at all times—namely, sturdy English pluck, enduring pluck. Nor was he clumsy in his way of fighting. If he had not the "science" and coolness of "Tinny," he had a quick eye, and wonderful adroitness in escaping that fellow's heavy blows, and was also remarkably ready to take advantage of any opening in order to "land" a fist on the nose of his opponent, or "plant" one between his eyes.

This we observed after the lapse of a quarter of an hour. At first our eyes were fascinated by the scientific sparring of our mysterious champion. It was the way in which he used his fists that had first brought him into notice, and for some time he described such wonderful circles around him, and shot such prostrating blows straight from the shoulder, as raised us to the height of joy in the belief that his reputation was destined to stand yet higher through the tremendous victory so soon to be achieved.

Unfortunately for these high expectations, "Tinny" had not so much "bottom" as his adversary. Joe would *not* be beaten. Although every time he closed he was thrown, he still "pegged away," and began to damage his enemy so much that, after a considerable time had elapsed, that valiant upholder of our liberties "caved in" (how expressive is that American phrase), formally shook hands with Joe, descended from that high pedestal upon which our faith and hope had placed him, and very

soon afterwards disappeared from the neighbourhood altogether.

“Scipio, the height of Rome,” says Milton. I might say that “Tinny” Gillett was the height of the “plebs.” All our combination and cleverness failed to produce his equal, so that henceforward we lay at the mercy of the “aristocs.” Not to speak of the way in which they shot ahead in the race for pre-eminence after winning the signal victory just mentioned, taking the lead in all our pastimes, and domineering over us on every occasion, they inflicted upon us many little annoyances, and goaded us with many petty insults, which made us often sigh for some new champion to arise—a William Tell or a Robert Bruce—bold and hardy enough to lead us to battle, if not to victory: but that deliverer never came. Our oppressors knew as well as we did our weakness, but, unlike us, they exulted in it. Though not distinguished for application to their studies, they had a laudable desire that we should not waste our time. One of our favourite amusements was making gro-

tesque sketches on our slates, instead of giving full attention to our lessons. Often when we had succeeded in covering our slates with representations of mad dogs, policemen in pursuit of them, boys climbing lamp-posts, pirates, hotly pursued, retreating to their ships, and the like, one of our enemies in passing us would quickly and effectually rub the pictures out, grinning most diabolically ; or, if we were secretly devouring some romance, would whip the book away from us before we could even see him, carry it off to his desk, and graciously make us a present of it next day.

We never thought of complaining. Indeed, it was obvious to us that we should gain very little by so doing, and our tormentors never carried tales, possibly for the same reason. But the anger, bordering on desperation, which these trying persecutions aroused in us, led to several pitched battles, in which we were both collectively and individually beaten, in few cases coming off with even the honours of war.

It is often found that the most hostile sec-

tions of a party will unite against a common foe. This was the case with our three sections after we (the "plebs") had submitted to our enemies' yoke for many months. The boys of a school close at a hand took it into their heads to systematically annoy us. For some time we were too disunited to do anything else than individually make reprisals; but as the audacity of the "foreigners" in consequence increased, it became an anxious question whether we should allow ourselves to be crushed one by one by "barbaric hordes;" or, forgetting all our jealousies and quarrels, combine and present a firm front to the new foe.

To the best of my belief, a rough conference was held, but certain it is that a regular spirited warfare began to be carried on against the other school, and that the head boy became our acknowledged leader.

The campaign lasted for a couple of months with varying success. Into it we threw our utmost energies. No sooner were we released in the morning than a rush was made for a

long, wide street, quiet, and with few houses in it. Here we would be drawn up in line, with slings, stones, sticks, and other murderous weapons. This street was very close to the shoolhouse of our foes, so that almost at the same time another small army, provided in the same way, would be drawn up opposite to us. Sometimes, after expending our shot, or when inferior in number to our adversaries, we would fly in a panic, and gain our homes by long circuits for fear of falling in with any of their troops.

At other times, from the same causes, they fled. Some of the more ferocious spirits of both sides even sallied out in the evening for the purpose of intercepting stragglers and beating them. They also watched the approaches to the schools in the early morning with persistent and savage earnestness. It sometimes required wonderful ingenuity to get to school at all. Round a circumstance which befell me in its course, the more prominent events of this school-war group themselves visibly in my memory. I was standing



one day with some friends at the corner of the street in which the schoolhouse of our rivals was situated, and around the doors of which they were assembled in great force waiting for the opening. With a thick stick in my hand, and language rather "unparliamentary," I was exhorting them in the manner of a Greek hero and Tom Sayers combined to "come on," when a stone, sent by some practised hand, neatly fixed itself in one of my eyes. It gave me great pain for some time, raised a large bump, and kept my eye in a blackened state for two or three weeks. After this, my zeal in the cause declined, the more so as the "cause" itself was rapidly declining. The masters of both schools, having become acquainted with the affair, brought their not exactly persuasive influence to bear upon the belligerents, and caused them, very soon after my mishap, to subside into their normal state of dislike or hollow friendship.

When I first entered the school, being rather shy, I became fast friends with a boy who was

much shyer. This similarity of disposition, I suppose, attracted us towards each other. Whatever the principal cause of attraction, there were no two boys in the school who clung together in sports, in walks, and in studies as we. Our acquaintance gradually strengthened itself, and finally budded into friendship, which still blooms, owing to the fact that inwardly, as well as outwardly, we were in accord. We were both passionately fond of reading, and of long adventurous walks; two things which the dead-level of boys, now as then, care little about. In two other pleasurable pursuits our original tastes differed, but our friendship made them in a manner blend. I was fond of poetry, he of drawing (his father was a portrait painter), therefore he became attached to poetry, as I to drawing. Alas! his drawing and love of poetry were soon swept away by the stern necessity which obliged him, on the death of his good father, to go into the unfeeling, sinful world. My drawing had no basis or fitness, and soon vanished. My love of poetry, and of that which it symbolises, still, thank God, exists.

I recall with saddened pleasure the long journeys and fatiguing expeditions which we made, generally by ourselves, though when the object was sport of any kind we were usually accompanied by two or three good-tempered schoolfellows, who were capital hands at cricket, or at kite-flying, but out of their element entirely when a book was to be discussed. In this way London became quite familiar to us. We thought nothing of a seven miles' walk to Hyde Park, though our comrades shuddered at the thought. Oh! the happy sunny days when there was no school! Should we go to Victoria, or St. James's, or Hyde Park? Should we cross London Bridge and dive into the vast territory beyond, or should we make a great effort and reach even the Forest itself—dreamy, romantic (to our minds) Epping Forest?

These were the various places to which we wended our way. Bow Common, which I have before mentioned, being nearer, was more frequented by us, on ordinary occasions as

having in it a large pond, which was called by all the boys the "little ocean," on the muddy waves of which we sported like dolphins, or spluttered and splashed in the hope of making lookers-on believe that we were swimming. We did not find all our pleasure upon reaching these goals; in fact, most of our delight in these rambles arose from the fact that they were often pure rambles; we knew not whither we were going, and we did not care as long as several hours lay between us and the time fixed for our return. Many hair-breadth 'scapes and troublesome adventures were incurred on these tours; especially when, in the course of a comparatively short journey, one or two more were with us, from a disposition inherent in London boys to play practical jokes, to knock at doors, to get behind cabs and waggons for a ride—tendencies which often made us fly for our lives—sometimes brought across our backs a thick stick, or drew upon us the stinging whip (I speak feelingly) of some angry cabby. Yet these strolls, with all their misadventures and fatigues,

were delightful. The obstacles now and then put in the way of our leaving home for so many hours gave a spice of uncertainty to our minds, and enhanced the joy of permission ; unconditional, save that it was limited by tea-time, which we were then obliged to wring from our parents.

But that which gave me and my inseparable the highest happiness was a book. We sacrificed to our love of reading time which we should have given to our studies. In this way we never advanced above the ranks of the "plebs," my friend keeping to the last the place just above me, and which my indolence in my lessons prevented me from occupying. Arithmetic and grammar I detested, and shirked them whenever I could. Geography didn't fare much better, but English history, as well as Biblical, suited my imaginative mind much better. By aid of these, together with a tenacious memory, fair writing (perhaps a little clearer than this), good reading and spelling, and good luck, I managed to keep my head

above water; but was mortified every half year to perceive boys in the second class walking off with costly books as prizes, while I obtained some trifling book which I devoured at a sitting. This mortification did not last long, for my friend and I had between us sixty or seventy books, which, supplemented by prizes and school-books, gave us a fair field of literature for a beginning. We read not only at home, but—I must out with it—at school. Protected from the master's gaze by the lid of one of our desks, we would "snatch a fearful joy" from the pages of some romance. In this way, "Monte Christo" was bit by bit gone through with rapturous delight. The ballads of "Robin Hood" were read again and again; the "Old English Baron," the "Castle of Otranto," "Captain Kyo, the Pirate," "Two Years before the Mast," "Pomfret's Poems," "Life of Dean Swift," and others of the like following.

Although studies were so far neglected as to prevent my attaining any position of importance on leaving school, I do not (reviewing con-

siderately that happy time) regret the hours that were devoted to poetry, biography, and prose fiction. The end of all teaching is education, not the ability to work a sum, conjugate a verb, draw a map, or repeat a string of dates, but the educement of the best powers of the mind. Who has these powers fully unfolded (for they lie closed up as buds in every mind) is really educated. Who has them not, though he speak a dozen languages and be brimming over with facts, he is but a parrot—fool after all.

Of those immortal units who formed "our school," what can I say? Most of them passed out of my ken years ago. In Longfellow's words—

Some are married, some are dead.

Some are "up" in the world, some are "down;" and some, like myself, are neither "up" nor "down." Some are thousands of miles away; others are to be found still within a stone's-throw of the old schoolhouse, standing yet, but used as a school no longer. I lost sight of Joe Adams for eleven years; when, suddenly one

day in 1872, I came across him not very far from the scene of his former exploits. The cordial way in which he shook hands, as well as the smile which streamed like sunshine over his face, made me think that in all probability contact with a world, which knows how to take the nonsense out of boy or man, had converted the lion into a very lamb-like person. The head boy stayed at school longer than I, and went fairly equipped in all respects into the battle of life, so that he now "draws" as salary three times more than I draw. Poor H., my comrade, gentle and studious, and fit for better things, experienced, after his father's death, hardship, want, and work ; three things for which his early boyhood had not prepared him. He is now, after many vicissitudes, a dragoon, stationed 200 miles away, and destined at no very distant period for service, and perhaps for an early death, in India. For myself, I trudge along ; accepting the hard or soft realities of life with as good grace as I can. I have no hope of ever making my "fortune;" only a faint hope of attaining that



domestic happiness which forms so bright a feature in every man's out-look. But I possess a hope that the lessons of life, which were so sternly forced upon me, have borne fruit in the shape of that practical wisdom which enables me to calm myself whilst others are rushing to and fro, gold-smitten; which makes me delight in the noblest thoughts of the mind, and which has given me that

Bliss of solitude,

the inward eye of the mind, keen-sighted enough to behold in every visible thing—humanity; sun, moon, and stars; bud, flower, and fruit; marginal fingers pointing unerringly to God, to resurrection, and to immortality.

After this comes a page entitled "Thought Sentences," doubtless meant to be used in some forthcoming work—which never was written.

THOUGHT SENTENCES.

1875. *March 8.*—There is nothing to be ashamed of in poverty, except being ashamed of it.

Dates are nails which fix events in their proper places.

A capital "I" is the symbol of genius.

Some souls absorb every sunny ray of God's blessings, and become hideously black in their selfishness. Other souls scatter what they receive in every direction, becoming, to the dullest eyes, absolutely snow-white in their goodness.

The soul of the man we talk to seems as remote as the last star visible to astronomers.

Man is a plant, woman a flower.

God often sees *self*, where we see *self-sacrifice*.

The next entry in the Note-book is also an unfinished Essay, very shrewd and clever, entitled "The Race for Gold." It seems to have been suggested by a paper, "Life at High-pressure;" "recently read," he says, "to a numerous and fashionable audience, by one of the most thoughtful men of my time," (I believe, Mr. W. R. Greg.) In it Martin sketches the general

result of the gold-fever on one hand, the out-rush of men of all ranks and classes to Australian and Californian gold-fields, which on the other hand he criticises, with the keen bitterness of one belonging to the lower and impecunious class, and feeling acutely from personal experience every line he writes, "that profuse expenditure and tinsel show of the upper classes, which seems to madden those beneath."

Everybody wants to gild himself as much as possible. Intense is the rage for fine clothes, costly furniture, carriages, servants, plate, luxurious dinners, rich wines. The upheaval of each class is only to this end—not to approach the wealthy and titled in culture, or even in bare accomplishments, but to imitate them in extravagance and ostentation. This desire is the curse of our days. Born of it is the lightning rapidity with which we get through life. Everything is at fever-heat. The only

man who can ruminate over his work is the peasant, if indeed threshing-machines and steam ploughs have not aroused his dull nature. Intelligence, industry, integrity—those three capital I's—are almost sacrificed to the demand for quickness. A “pushing” young man is a common advertisement adjective. Any one who has spent much time in the heart of London—say the vicinity of Mincing Lane—has seen the speed with which business of the vastest scale is transacted. The very “sleeping partners” are dreadfully wide awake, and work like slaves. The clerks bolt a bun, toss after it a glass of ale, and as if half ashamed of themselves for such weakness, make the pen race after the paper faster than ever. The rush to railways, cabs, and 'busses, in the morning, is indeed a rush. Wherever you go in the City—and in a less degree this is true of all centres of trade or manufacture—you find no one able or willing to spare five minutes for a reasonable chat. Link yourself arm-in-arm with your suddenly encoun-

tered friend, and before you have time even to speculate audibly on the "weather," you behold him diving into some dark passage which contains only dingy offices. If you care to wait for him, pushed all the while contemptuously aside as a mere idler by the overflowing stream of merchants, clerks, and porters, you may see him emerge after many minutes with the air of one who has nothing at all on his conscience regarding you. If you accost him again, your patience and friendship stand a chance of being worn out by finding that every alternate set of offices has as fatal an attraction for him as the Maelstrom is said to have for ships that approach its whirling waters.

This red-hot haste, this race for gold—not for honour, fame, comfort, or happiness, but for mere vulgar display—is the acknowledged evil of the present day, though few voices have been raised to denounce it. Carlyle in some of his jargon sentences touches upon it; but I do not know the man who steadily sets his face against

the corroding Mammon-worship, who strives with pen and personal influence to bring about a nobler state of things.

This very important subject has many phases, some of which as they present themselves in fair perspective to my mind's eye, shall be noted down, and enlarged upon, as time, or rather the Eternal, permits.

"The Eternal" did not permit. No end, except this abrupt one, do I find to the Essay, which, in spite of a certain overflow of words, and a conventional putting forward as original thoughts with which most thinkers and writers are familiar, is remarkable, as all his MSS. are, for a clear decision of style, rare even in practised authors. It is, as he somewhere explains, the first draft, yet there is not one correction or interlineation; every sentence comes out terse and strong; neither weakness nor hesitation appears in the firm, bold, legible

handwriting, in itself sufficient indication of character. What the man might have been, had years been granted him to think out all his boyish thoughts, to review the vivid and passionate impressions of youth by the steady calm light of middle age; above all, had fortune smiled upon him, and good health—that stronghold of both mind and body, which few ever rightly value till they lose—had been his portion, what John Martin would have been, and have done, who can say? It is one of those mournful questions the answer to which never comes in this world, but may perhaps—pray God it be so!—in the world everlasting.

The next page is a brief criticism on Spenser's *Faërie Queen*, just read, "an enchanting flowery Arcadia for all lovers of true poetry." After it comes a very different sort of article, entitled—

## PESSIMIST NOTES.

While the evil fit is upon me let me record it. Let me ignore all the sunshine which streams upon human life, and only take note of the deep shadows which those golden rays pierce. No David is here to soothe the desponding breast. Woe, or the clear remembrance of woeful thoughts, in this comparatively tranquil time, must have its course.

The despair of ever attaining noble ends, the anxieties about material wants which gradually narrow the mind and corrode the spirit; the solitude which is the inevitable fate of the poor man; the absence of those refining influences and delicate surroundings which the soul craves as its portion of worldly good; the uncertainty of life; the certainty of sin and death—what shadows can be more horrid in their density and extent? Who but the unseen yet ever-present Eternal can charm away the fiends of doubt, of gloom, of despondency, which these separate evils conjure up in our minds.

It is hard for a man, especially a young man,



to have these lessons of life forced upon his notice so incessantly as to make gloom become his habitual companion ; but what does all experience, all reflection, teach but sadness, springing from the conviction of the vanity of all earthly things ? This feeling receives its sickening nourishment from almost every circumstance, every fact, every deep thought. We inhale sorrow every hour from the air round us ; we perceive it at a distance as well as in our neighbourhood ; we draw it from our thinking minds ; we feel it in the painful throbbings of our hearts.

We lie at the mercy of each varying mood. These moods take half the freedom from our life, and, indeed, constitute its greatest bale. Some future genius, if, after the manner of Dante, he poetically punishes his enemies, should picture the greatest misery as resulting from the rapid and constant alternation betwixt joy and grief, pain and ease, freedom and bondage, hope and despair, to which some unfortunates should be subject. Not Farinata's tomb would be so tor-

turing ; no, nor the vulture of Prometheus cause such griping agony ; nor Tantalus nor Sisyphus experience such disappointment and pain.

Consider these moods and their effects more closely. Have you never in some almost holy moment made up your mind to revolutionise the world, or, better still, to revolutionise yourself ? Ah ! you glow yet at the recollection of that moment, that hour, perhaps that day. Noble resolutions were then made. By God's grace the idols (glittering with many a sinful gift of mine) of impurity, of selfishness, of doubt, of anger, of deceit, shall be laid low in the temple of my soul—shall all be thrown out and trodden under the feet of earnest endeavours and fervent prayers ; God shall resume his rightful place in my soul again. Eh ? Well, well, you *meant* the very best at the time, but unluckily it was only at the time. That very evening you were the gayest of the gay. I heard your voice in loud and angry altercation, or you were thinking of nothing but the most pitiful self. You coldly regarded that generous impulse which had

swayed your whole nature in the morning as a mighty wind shakes a mighty tree. You had come by supper-time to look upon the resolutions of the morning in no very hostile spirit, perhaps, but certainly in no enthusiastic one, with no desire to put them into practice. You had changed, in a few hours, your standpoint altogether; in other words, a new mood had taken complete possession of you.

Or say that doubts had crept into your mind, just then receptive of God's light—the Truth—about the moral honesty or nobility of the trade or occupation in which you were engaged. These doubts, resolving themselves at last into absolute certainty, into a conviction of the baseness of your pursuit, made you look around to your fellow-men in vain for advice, and finally to the heavens, both for advice and aid. In that hour, when Truth, from whom springs Justice and Love, was plainly visible to you, its path of duty lying straight before your eyes, you were ever so many degrees nearer Heaven than your neighbours; but that attitude was not kept by

you for any long time. Behold, I see you, as day after day I pass Ingot's blear-windowed office—or, if I pass it not, I see you in imagination just as well—sitting on your high stool. You wear spectacles, and hard are the lines of your face. Those lines, made by avarice, by unsanctified labour, by a loveless life, are like ropes stretched across your stern countenance, and typify the harder bondage of your soul. Perhaps you are Ingot's partner; but it matters nothing to me, and little to you.

The hour of noble resolution was succeeded by the hour of selfish promptings, of coward fears. Hence you have plenty of money, but no happiness, and I know you almost hate yourself.

Perhaps in two opposing moods were balanced an organised superstition and the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. Or Ignorance, with astonished and sleepy eyes and heavy pace (for has she not leaden shoes?), her dress all disarranged and miserably gaudy, lazily divided your attention from bright-eyed Knowledge, whose long, flowing dress has wonderful pictures hidden within

its graceful folds. Happy for you if the hour in which lofty resolves flowered was not succeeded almost instantly, by a period which scattered those perfuming blossoms with terrific gusts of passion, God knows where, or killed them with freezing doubt.

Thus we are never sure of ourselves. We are swayed hither and thither by various outward circumstances, by various inward resolves, as also by the fury of passion. Well are we likened to barques on a calm or stormy sea. At any moment it may subside into gentle heavings, lulled to sleep by winds that are as soft as a sick child's breath. The wisest and the best dread above all evils this ever-changing state of human emotion and thought. Even holy St. Paul has no confidence in himself. "Lest at any moment I myself may be a castaway," he says. The good Sir Matthew Hale would not publicly profess himself to be a more than ordinary Christian, for, as he said, he was afraid to do so, lest he might in some God-forgetting hour do something which might bring reproach upon Christianity.

These changeful dispositions of the mind then are calculated to cause profound sorrow. Through them one moment we behold things in summer splendour ; birds sing, flowers bloom, golden light diffuses itself everywhere, shepherds pipe, and maidens dance—it is Fairyland. The next, the scene becomes drear and barren, the atmosphere is bitterly cold, the trees are leafless, and seem to stretch their withered arms imploringly to the sullen sky—doleful silence environs us. These are the two spectacles through which we look out into life, very seldom using our proper vision to behold, it is true, misery and sin around us, but God and eternity not far off.

Let these mood-spectacles drop from before our bewildered eyes, for we can perceive without their aid at all quite enough in life to make us sad. I will briefly note a few mournful facts which require for their perception no mournfulness in the mind, no sad-coloured glasses to deepen their gloom.

1. Who can behold the rapid wasting away of leaves, plants, fruits, flowers, as the year gets

older and older, without experiencing a profound feeling of sadness? But we need not wait till the year ages in order to clearly see this decline of Nature's most beauteous things. Attending the coronation of Spring and her arrayal in most brilliant robes, Summer's splendid triumphal perfumed march, and Autumn's slowly-conducted procession of languid days, bearing corn, wine, and fruits—is miserable, loathsome decay. He grasps, with withering fingers, the flowers just dropped from April's golden-fingered hand; the wheat that nods dreamily by the side of tired June; the grapes that August was about to put to his parched lips. Those darlings, the prim-roses and violets, so "sweet and clean," fade all too soon. We have a slight compensation, as time advances, in more showy flowers (which themselves have no long life); but our hearts always turn affectionately and regretfully to the memory of the simple, childlike things, which, after so long a deathly sleep, raised their modest heads above the cold ground with resurrection impressed upon every petal. The poetical

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expostulation is, that although the Spring lasts but a very short time, it yet reappears with its tender flowerets as plentiful, itself as delightful, as ever. I know it. I know also that the Winter will come on again; that its winds will howl like horrible ghosts around my house as fiercely as they did last winter; that the land will be covered by a white, hard, deathly shroud—but no comfort is afforded me by that knowledge. The joy we feel at the approach of Spring is mild compared to the grief with which we view the death of vegetation and the coming on of dark, cold months. The last days of Autumn are inexpressibly dreary in their aspect and suggestions to the thinking mind. We seem, in one of those curious moments which come perhaps to every man—one of those beside-one-self moments—to have an idea that there is something incongruous in our continuing to live while Nature appears to be fast dying. And truly, precious parts of us do die. Those withered leaves which strew the ground are dead hopes blown for ever from our lives. That chill



period, which we know to be approaching, freshens in our memory the icy despair which, at one or two stern epochs of our life, took entire possession of our souls.

2. The various diseases which assail the human body present another gloomy picture to our notice. How melancholy to see the gradual consuming away of lovely bodies—houses

Not built by hands;

just as we are learning to love them, to look with confidence upon their future—they fade, die, and we behold them no more. But in cases like these we have the least repulsive and least distressing evidences of the frailty of man's flesh put before us. There are those diseases which deform the body, which twist it into hideous shapes suggestive of mythologic monsters, or of those distorted sinners that crowd the "Inferno." There are those fiend-like maladies, which seem to wrestle, as the evil spirits in the Saviour's time did, with their victims, on the ground, in bed—anywhere, in fact, and at any

time—leaving them with foaming mouths, weak and dazed. There are those plagues of mysterious origin, which periodically sweep the air, and make Death itself stare aghast at the rapidity with which his work is done. Besides, there are the accidents, some shocking, and all saddening, which lie in wait for us at every step we take. If we had vision which could pierce walls and roofs, what ghastly, sickening sights we should behold in more houses than we think. Contortions impossible to describe; agony, perhaps for years bravely borne, but agony nevertheless; we should hear, if we could penetrate thousands of houses, shrieks smothered by the noise of passers-by, if not deadened by thick walls; idiotic babblings or insane ravings which almost make us tremble for our own minds—men, once strong, now weaker than babes and disgustingly pitiable. There is exquisite bodily anguish on every side of us, calculated, if it were displayed, to take away half the amount of pleasure we manage to extract from life. We see multitudes of people walking about, and are disposed to

imagine that but a small proportion of humanity physically suffers. But hidden in hospitals, workhouses, and filthy garrets—not to speak of luxurious haunts of pain—sometimes left to the mercy, as the expression runs, of inhuman or careless people, is a vast army of wretched sufferers who are never likely to tread the street again.

3. The man who thoughtfully beholds the state of the squalid poor in a great city cannot but experience deep dejection of spirit. Their miserable poverty, their ignorance, their vices, their filthy habits and surroundings, the utter failure of their lives, to human view, seem actually to accuse Providence of neglect, of indifference, of actual aversion, or of finite power. They herd in garbage-strewn alleys, courts, and lanes, whose atmosphere is pestilential. The delights of literature are not theirs. All appreciation of Art as distant from them as are the Heavens. The beauties of Nature they know and care nothing about; indeed, poor souls, little chance have they of leaving their vile quarters.

The stars are nearer to them than the fields.



Here is matter for the pessimist. Ay, from this out-look alone, perhaps the ghastliest, most thought-sickening side of humanity may be discerned. The poor of great cities are crowded together regardless of age, sex, or disease. One tiny room often serves the purposes of a house, a workshop, a garden, a hospital, and a mortuary, to eight or ten people. They sleep and cook and eat in this one room. Then again, a few stunted flowers that never flower attempt to rear their grimy leaves from a few old pots placed on the inner ledge of the window. The work, by means of which they manage to exist, is often begun and completed in this one room. If a member of the family becomes ill (and this is too often the result of bad food and tainted air), he has the pleasure of seeing all the operations of the family, domestic or otherwise, carried on immediately beneath his nose. And finally, the babe just ushered into this world often lies upon the same bed as its dead father for the first day of its existence; and certainly, for days after, wakes and cries and sleeps not three yards

from his dead body; for the poor have an absurd desire to keep from the ground its lawful tribute as long as decay will abstain from passing over that tribute its "effacing fingers."

I have, while ascending creaking, filthy stairs in an obscure part of London—semi-darkness attending me all the way—had to hold my breath so as not to inhale the foul odours which haunted these dens. I have wondered over and over again how the denizens arranged their sleeping quarters; for often a small, suspicious-looking pallet, with a heap of nasty-looking rags, seemed to offer the only means of lying down on anything but bare boards to seven or eight persons.

These people, as might be expected from their houses and surroundings, are, for the most part, ignorant and vicious. There is a click-clack of shrill tongues going on from morning to night. Fights are of hourly occurrence, and blackened eyes as plentiful as blackberries. Drunkenness, quarrelling, gossiping, and lounging at street corners, are the only recreations which they

have. For any hope of nobler things, for any desire to do right, for any knowledge at all of the first truths of Christianity—of their duty as parents, and their obligations as members of society—full half of these people might be written down as savage heathens. The ministers of religion—and hundreds of them slave with sincerity and wonderful persistency—effect very little good among them. The danger to society from the fact of their productiveness, and from the lawless way in which their children are “dragged up,” is principally modified by the refining influence of the elementary teacher upon their children, and by the habits of order, cleanliness, and obedience which they are forced to acquire at school. But for the school, the evils to be apprehended from this quarter would be intolerable. They would, in fact, constitute the great evil of our day, subversive alike of religion and civilisation in our midst. Even as things are, this horrible condition of the proletariat is a formidable “rock ahead,” and demands the consideration of the statesman, as well as

of the philanthropist or Christian. To all eyes turned in this direction, the sight is additionally distressing on account of the evidence it gives of the moral and physical degradation which dog man's footsteps. It shows that the human face and form divine may be totally obscured by sin, dirt, disease, and misery. That upon tens of thousands of our kin a monstrous life seems thrust by some iron, pitiless power, like to that which we call Fate. That no way seems to offer itself by which these people may be raised from their not only materially wretched, but godless state. That down to the worms they must go—unloved, unknown, terror-stricken, and hopeless.

Thus, with the brief line, "More notes to follow"—alas, none ever did follow!—ends the "fit." That such fits did not come oftener upon the poor fellow, battling day by day with toil, loneliness, disease, and slow-advancing death, is the surprising thing; not that, as in this bitter